The Nation

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PUBLIC OPINION has sounded the doom of the noble experiment. The accelerating swing of the pendulum away from prohibition culminated in the Senate in the unexpectedly decisive straight vote for repeal of 62 to 23. The House followed suit with a vote of 289 to 121. Even a provision against the return of the saloon was struck out, but the importation of liquor into States that choose to be dry is prohibited. This is the common-sense way of eliminating the legislation born of war excitement and pressure politics. Liquor control must be worked out anew, and this can best be done with a clean legislative slate. While the details of ratification by conventions as provided in this Twenty-first Amendment remain to be worked out, it now seems probable that the long-prophesied impossibility of removing the Eighteenth Amendment will yield to the rushing tide of wet sentiment. The speed with which the Twentieth (lame-duck) Amendment was ratified after its long opposition in Congress is suggestive of the ready acceptance of legislation whose moment has arrived. The grotesqueries which flourished under Volsteadism—the lawlessness and violence which it engendered—have converted millions who are sincerely solicitous for temperance, and the possible economic advantages of finding new sources of tax revenue will hasten ratification.

THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM raised by the repeal resolution is how and when the State ratifying conventions are to be called and the form they are to take. The Constitution provides that amendments shall be valid "when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress." The Constitution does not state, however, whether Congress has the power to summon such conventions itself, or whether they can be summoned only by the State legislatures; nor does it state whether Congress can fix the time, method, or form of such conventions. Former Attorney-General Palmer believes that Congress has this power, but Congressman Beck does not. The truth is that the language of the amendatory clause of the Constitution is itself ambiguous, and as this is the first time in our history that ratification by State conventions has been proposed, no one can know, until the courts have passed on the question, precisely what the powers of Congress in this respect are. But that in itself is a reason why Congress, if it does not wish to delay repeal and have any result upset by the courts, should be careful not to transcend its powers. Its best present course would probably be to pass a resolution recommending the time, method, and form of such State conventions that it considers most desirable, without attempting to make any of these mandatory. Certainly, one course that seems clearly advisable is for the States to provide that delegates favoring repeal of the amendment should be voted for in a body, as well as delegates opposing repeal. This would follow the method already used in voting for Presidential electors; and it would eliminate, as it should, all questions concerning the personalities of the delegates.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS David S. Barry, removed from office by the United States Senate on February 7 for writing "there are not many Senators . . . who sell their vote for money," might have presented a better defense one week later. At least he would not have been obliged to confess ignominiously to having "no Senator in mind" and of not knowing "that there is such a Senator." On February 14 Earl Long, before the Senate committee investigating fraud in the Broussard-Overton Senatorial primary, stated that he had been told by his brother Huey that a man "named Abell had given him $10,000 and that Huey was sort of afraid to use the money for fear it was marked." Mr. Abell was identified as H. C. Abell, representative of the Electric Bond and Share Company, giant super-holding company of many lesser utility holding and operating companies, including the New Orleans Public Service Company. The Senator's brother explained the motive for the transaction by saying to the Senator: "You began with proposing a big tax on them and ended with a tax just about what their lobby was costing." Earl Long likewise testified that his brother, the Senator, had telephoned to someone in Plaquemines Parish to "tell a man that he wanted to get enough votes there to fix it where it could stand a contest." Other charges related to "graft from $4,000 to $10,000 a

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mile in building roads," and a bridge deal out of which Senator-presumably-elect Overton, Huey Long's candidate and political ally, was to make $200,000. Needless to say, Senator Long used the short and ugly word, and much other picturesque language, in replying to his brother's testimony. But how the United States Senate can fail to take cognizance of such grave accusations, and to extend the scope of inquiry to include not merely Overton's but Long's record, it is difficult to see. After expelling Mr. Barry summarily, the Senate is in common decency bound to delve deeply into the scandals aired from the bosom of the Long family. Senator Huey Long must either be unmistakably cleared at the bar of the Senate or be expelled as unfit.

THE TESTIMONY of Samuel Insull, Jr., the youngster who a year ago was drawing an annual salary of $113,000 as president of one of his father's numerous companies, further reveals how completely our late giants of finance have deemed themselves above the law. Insull, Jr., admitted that Insull Utility Investments Company had published in 1930 earnings of $10,343,000. That was the story told the investors—"hooked" and prospective. But with the federal income-tax bureau Insull Utility Investments Company in the same year filed a net loss of $6,493,000. Well, it was another Chicago "big shot," Al Capone, who was finally brought to book for his fraudulent income-tax return. If one assesses the relative demerits of the Capone racket based on beer and the Insull racket based on electricity, the underworld gangster comes out ahead. He sought to defraud the United States government. He did not, at the same time, seek to defraud the "widows and orphans" for whom the propaganda literature originated by the Insulls pleaded so eloquently while denouncing any proposals to regulate holding companies and their financing.

AS FOR CHARLES G. DAWES, he is another interesting exhibit as a pillar of our society (small wonder it is crumbling!). He admitted at the same Senate committee hearing that his bank had violated the "spirit" of the Illinois law which forbids a bank to lend more than 15 per cent of its capital and surplus to any one individual or company. His Central Republic Bank and Trust Company of Chicago had lent $11,977,400, or nearly 50 per cent of its capital and surplus of $24,000,000, to the tottering Insull structure. But as there were numerous Insull companies, Mr. Dawes insisted that the procedure was "technically" within the law. How strikingly this affair resembles his earlier loan to ex-Senator William Lorimer! When Lorimer's moribund national bank in Chicago in 1914 was about to be closed by the Comptroller of the Currency, he hastily decided to have it made over into a State bank. But in order to comply with existing legislation he had to prove that the bank had on hand $1,250,000 in "actually paid-in cash." Lorimer did not have the money, but his friend, Charlie Dawes, then head of the Central Trust Company, without his directors' knowledge lent Lorimer the million and a quarter dollars with which he successfully deceived the State auditor when that official came to make his inspection. Lorimer got his permit and returned the money to Dawes, with the result that the bank collapsed and thousands of depositors lost their savings—just as thousands of investors have now lost everything they had in the crash of the Insull companies. The worthless Insull paper which the present Dawes bank received as collateral was in part responsible for the bank's requiring $90,000,000 of the public's money to avoid closing. But this was not revealed by President Hoover in his St. Louis address last November 4, when, to refute "constant misrepresentation," he told in great detail how his Administration had saved the Dawes bank.

THE ACTUAL SOLICITUDE for the widow's mite on the part of the banking-utility fraternity was revealed in the testimony of Harold L. Stuart, president of Halsey, Stuart and Company, another eminently respectable investment-banking concern. "How a Widow Should Invest $10,000" was the title of one of its weekly radio broadcasts by the "Old Counselor." This form of security salesmanship, Mr. Stuart testified, had been suggested to him by Merlin H. Aylesworth, then president of the National Broadcasting Company. Merlin's wizardry had previously been revealed when, as managing director of the National Electric Light Association, he advised a convention of power-company public-relations experts: "Never mind the expense—the public pays the expense." He was impressing upon them the utilities' practice of charging their propaganda costs to "operating expenses" and letting the consumer pay it in higher rates. Apparently the investor, too, paid. "For ——— sake, is there any issue that Halsey, Stuart sold me that is not going into default?" read a letter from a customer introduced into the record by Attorney Ferdinand Pecora, counsel to the Senate Banking Committee. When the Halsey, Stuart "Old Counselor" was pushing the Insull securities, he did not inform his "friends of the radio audience" that quite apart from the usual banker's commissions and underwriting profits, the firm was itself heavily interested in Insull companies. But part of the advice sent out by that reputable house to one woman customer—whether widow or no, the record telleth not—was to sell her United States government bonds and buy the now worthless debentures of Mr. Insull's Corporation Securities Company.

"THAT IS WHAT was to be expected." These are the words attributed to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt by some of the newspapers when she heard that her husband had been fired at by a crazy man in Miami. It recalled the matter-of-fact remark of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy, after a similar experience, that it was an inevitable accompaniment of the trade of being king. Anyone who takes high office runs the risk of falling a victim to a maniac or a criminal. As Mr. Roosevelt's experience shows, secret-service guards offer no certain protection; it was apparently the act of a plucky woman, Mrs. W. F. Cross, which saved the life of the President-elect. Of course, the sensational press attempted to fasten the crime upon the reds, and Zangara's foreign birth was made the excuse for an effort to pass in hot haste and anger one of the restrictive immigration bills which the Senate to its credit has so far failed to act upon. Fortunately, as we go to press, the innocent victims are recovering. Zangara, meanwhile, having been adjudged sane, has been sentenced to eighty years in prison. Franklin Roosevelt's well-balanced, kindly, and generous nature makes it certain that he will see this incident in a true perspective and refuse to allow it to be made the excuse either for reactionary legislation or for cutting him off from a normal life.

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ADOLF HITLER is hourly giving the answer to those deluded Germans who have been favoring his elevation to the chancellorship on the ground that responsibility would tame him and make a good old conservative out of him. As a matter of fact, he is proceeding as if he considered himself sole dictator—as if he were Mussolini in Italy—and by the same methods. He is suppressing even Catholic dailies that dare to criticize his government. He has taken away the passes of prominent pacifists so that they are prisoners within their own country. One of his lieutenants has informed a large audience of students that the government will stamp out at once all Marxists, all pacifists, all internationalists—everybody who does not believe in Hitlerism. Liberty, he explained to the listening youth, is not a desirable thing or a benefit to a country! It is announced that every political meeting in the present campaign will be policed by members of Hitler's private army or of the Stahlhelm—which means, of course, that this police will be armed and will suppress the slightest criticism of the Nazis or of the Hitler Government. More than that, in the small cities and in the provinces there is certain to be a Hitler terrorism which will keep many voters at home or threaten them with violence if the votes in their precinct should not prove to be "patriotic" or "wise." This is the way of all dictators. This is the way their ruthlessness is tempered by authority! Yet there are innumerable Americans who insist that a dictatorship is what we need in this country.

AN ARTICLE on another page of this issue, **Paralysis and Profits**, tells in detail the story of a small row which is touched with large public interest. The issue involved is this: Should a man who has developed, in a university laboratory, an instrument for saving lives be permitted to patent his discovery, sell it for his own private profit, and so prevent the manufacture by another person or concern of a better instrument at a lower cost? The Drinker respirator or "artificial lung," used in the treatment of infantile paralysis, was developed in the laboratories of the Harvard School of Public Health. Its manufacturer is suing John Haven Emerson, the inventor of an improved and cheaper respirator, for infringing upon the patents protecting the Drinker machine, even though it is admitted that this machine in its present form embodies several ideas which were first used in the Emerson invention.

PROOFS of *The Nation's* article discussing this case were sent in advance of publication to several interested persons, including President Lowell of Harvard and Dean Edsall of the Harvard Medical School. While *The Nation* was still awaiting some promised comments from these persons, it was announced in the press that the Harvard Corporation had adopted a resolution stating that "no member of either of these schools [the Schools of Medicine and Public Health] should take out for his own profit, or make any profit on, a patent upon any invention or discovery that affects the health of individuals or the public. That if to protect the public against misuse of the invention or discovery it is necessary to control it by means of a patent, that should be applied for in such a name and under such conditions as the Corporation may determine." It is gratifying that the Corporation has taken this stand, even if such action was hastened by the imminence of publicity. The resolution clears the university of any further connection, direct or indirect, with the Drinker affair, and, more important, it establishes a principle to be applied in future cases—which would have seemed obvious under the long-established code of medical ethics. Unfortunately, this belated action will not serve to right a present wrong; the Corporation makes it plain that its action is not to be taken as a reflection on either Drinker or the Collins company which manufactures his respirator. Mr. Emerson is left the satisfaction of knowing that his efforts and his personal inconvenience and loss have resulted in a lasting reform.

A MILITANT FEMINIST is the very reverend Archbishop of York. He has come out publicly and courageously, on the floor of the House of Lords, in favor of women's right to be hanged. Outraged by the sentiment which discriminates against women and frequently prevents them from hanging even when the law is clearly on their side, the Archbishop calls upon the female sex to "rise in protest." "It is a horrible insult to them," he says, "and they ought to resent it with ferocity." Of course we understand the Archbishop's generous indignation. It would be awfully gratifying if women could feel that they would be hanged just like men. But a few other legal disabilities remain which English women might possibly protest against first. There is, for instance, that little matter of exclusion from the House of Lords. If the Archbishop would see to it that women were admitted to that exclusive assemblage on equal terms with men, with how much more effective ferocity could they protest against all sorts of insults! We suggest that the women of England demand this right even before they begin chaining themselves to the gallows.

THE NATIONS CONTINUE to shock one another on a more and more spectacular scale. We have, of course, grown used to having foreign films censored to render them fit for America and American films similarly purified by foreign importers. England, for example, insists upon inserting a marriage ceremony in the new Clark Gable–Joan Crawford picture, although our own Presbyterian Elder Will Hays guarantees the purity of our products. But the situation grows daily more complicated. On the one hand the British Empire Exposition has just had to recall from the Orient advertising posters which shocked the sensibilities of Moslems in Egypt and India. They showed the lady, Britannia, lifting a beckoning finger—a gesture soliciting trade, but not of the personal variety the male Moslem mistook it for. On the other hand, our own customs authorities, who can be relied upon to go everyone else at least one better, excluded photographs of the Michelangelo frescos in the Sistine Chapel on the ground that they were indecent. It is true that the decision was later reversed when the art experts who pass upon such matters learned that the frescos in question adorned the innermost holy of holies of Catholic Christendom, but the time has obviously come for a little international cooperation or compromise. Bargaining is the order of the day. Why should not England agree to admit the "Kama Sutra" if India will admit the exposition posters, and why should not America agree to tolerate Michelangelo if the Pope will let up a bit on contraceptive literature?

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Do We Need a Dictator?

EMPHATICALLY not! Nothing in the existing situation, grave, critical, and menacing as it is, warrants the overthrow of our system of government or the concentration in the hands of the incoming President of powers which are not already his under the Constitution. Congressional government has not broken down. The time has not come to abandon our faith in our democratic institutions, or to proclaim to the world that they cannot stand the stress and strain of the present economic crisis. There is no inherent virtue or wisdom in a dictator not to be found in a President. The mere appointment of a dictator, or a dictatorship of three or five, will not in itself solve any of the innumerable problems before us. Similarly it should be clear that the so-called obstructionist tactics of the Congress are not wholly responsible for the failure of the country to recover from the slump or to see before it a clear road to the restoration of our lost prosperity and economic well-being.

What we are suffering from is far less the weaknesses of the Congress than the total absence of clear-cut, wise, and constructive leadership in the White House. After all, the Executive is there to lead, not only because he is the head of his party, but because he is also the head of the nation. The truth is that we have had no White House guidance of a progressive kind, none to challenge the imagination or to sketch out far-reaching policies, since the first two years of Mr. Wilson's Administration. We have had from Mr. Hoover the weakest kind of effort to provide a program for the country and its parliament. He misconceived the crisis from the beginning, misrepresented it to the public, announced that it was rapidly passing by and was nothing to be worried about. When he was forced to admit the gravity of the situation he was unable to make any worth-while recommendations. It is not possible to know at this date whether Mr. Roosevelt will be able to prove to the country that he has sufficient knowledge and wisdom to guide us in this emergency. But if he has not that wisdom now, how on earth will it help to give him additional power? Such a grant will not open his eyes to economic truths that he does not already see; it will not give him greater resoluteness of character or endow him with stronger leadership.

The truth is that we are again chasing after a mere slogan in our old familiar American way. Last year everybody was calling for the balancing of the budget. Wall Street, Mr. Hoover, and the conventional editors were all crying for it. Secretary Mills assured us that if the budget was not balanced, disaster lay immediately ahead. *The Nation* was scorned because it declared that the budget could not be balanced and that it would not ruin us if it were not. But a bill was passed, Mr. Hoover and Mr. Mills declared that the budget *was* balanced, and the banker and newspaper packs promptly went baying off in another direction. Next came the demand for economy; that was to be the cure-all. Innumerable wiseacres at solemn dinner tables demanded a national cabinet—merely because England had one, although they did not know whether the result in England was favorable or unfavorable. And now it is dictatorship—with Walter Lippmann well in front calling it "the paramount issue," "the right direction." He is certain that the only thing to do is to give to the President "the widest powers over the administration of the government and over expenditures which it is possible to grant him under the Constitution"—just as if the President did not already possess all the powers which the Constitution allows him. No latent Presidential powers are hidden away in the Constitution to be conferred upon the President by some vote of the Congress.

Mr. Lippmann is also certain that we must choke off "unlimited debate and obstruction" in both houses of Congress and he wants to restore to the Executive certain rights and powers which have been "usurped" by Congress because of Congressional yielding to petty local influences. Is there anything in the situation which could not be squarely met by an Executive of courage, independence, and force, ready, as were Woodrow Wilson and Grover Cleveland in their time, to go over the head of Congress and appeal to the public if Congress should prove recalcitrant? Indeed, Congress is waiting for just this sort of leadership. Moreover, when Congress meets again there will be an overwhelming majority of Democrats in both houses—not one-quarter of the Senate will be composed of Old Guard Republicans. Doubtless unduly large majorities are unwieldy, but in this emergency the party leaders will be only too happy to follow Mr. Roosevelt's requests, if he proves that he knows his own mind, has a program, and is determined to put it through—even to the extent of withholding patronage until he achieves it. But if he fails to do this, hamstringing the Congress and laying the foundations for a complete dictatorship will not help us.

But even if this should aid us temporarily, it would be better to suffer the delays which may come from a stupid and frightened Congress than to open the way for a dictator. Let us not have even the nose of that camel thrust into the tent of American government, let alone his head. One needs only to look at the latest dictator in Europe, Adolf Hitler, to see how quickly the liberties and rights of individuals may be menaced by a demagogue certain that his country's parliament also is of no further use, that his ideas are the cure-alls for his country's ills. Of course there should be reasonable, voluntary limitation of debate in the Senate in this emergency, but criticism is not always merely a means of delay. Far from it. Nothing in Mr. Roosevelt's record warrants the belief that everything he recommends will be completely wise.

Few journalists ever wrote more damning things about a public man than Walter Lippmann was writing only a year ago about this same Franklin D. Roosevelt to whom he now wishes to give tremendous power. If the President-elect sounds the keynote and takes the aggressive in well-reasoned suggestions, Congress will follow him willingly or will be compelled to by public opinion. But the Senate is the only debating forum left in America. As such, it is of inestimable value to our institutions, to our liberties, to the possibility of our progress along wise and sane lines. Muzzling it is no more desirable than to end all public criticism in the press and elsewhere. But if we muzzle Congress, muzzles for the rest of us will come as a matter of course, particularly if the emergency should become more critical.

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Back the League!

THE future of peace in the Far East depends more upon the actions and decisions of the United States and Russia than upon any pronouncements by the League of Nations. It is both remarkable and heartening, in fact, that the Committee of Nineteen has dared to utter so final, though so judicious, a condemnation of Japan's reckless course in Manchuria without first ascertaining the response which could be expected from Moscow and Washington. That the fate of the world in the next few years may hang on the united efforts of two nations which at present are not even on speaking terms is ironical and fantastic; and is not the least among the reasons why Roosevelt should make recognition of Russia one of his early official acts.

Meanwhile the League has gone ahead, relying in part upon Russia's known objections to Japanese aggression in Manchuria and Roosevelt's known support of the Stimson doctrine, but at the same time leaving open a door through which it may withdraw in case Russia and the United States fail to come along. The statement issued by the Committee of Nineteen, to be acted upon by the League, reviews at length Geneva's long efforts to bring about peace in the East: the repeated promises of Japan to withdraw its troops, the repeated advances by Japan in contempt of the League and its own promises, the inquiry by the Lytton Commission, the subsequent attempts at conciliation, the refusal of the Japanese to consider withdrawal of their troops or the abandonment of Manchukuo, and the committee's ultimate decision that conciliation must be given up. The report urges as a next step mediation by a committee of the League on which the United States and Russia should be represented, and outlines the terms of a final settlement, which should include recognition of China's sovereignty in Manchuria, provision for the protection of Japan's special interests there, and the establishment of an autonomous government with a local gendarmerie.

But how is this most judicial arrangement to be put into effect? It is known and admitted in advance that Japan will reject the entire proposal, whether or not it withdraws from the League, and it is probable that many elements in the League will be delighted if they can merely accept the report and then let the matter drop. But too much blood has been poured over the plains of Manchuria and too much will flow when the Japanese press into Jehol to make it possible to end the debate with a mere vote of disapproval. The peace of the whole world hangs perilously in the balance. If the Assembly accepts the committee's report, the nations of the League are pledged not to recognize Japan's conquests; and further advances by Japan, in defiance of the League's recommendations, will be looked upon by China as acts of war. China will undoubtedly appeal for further protection from Geneva, and the League will have to proceed further along the line it has already laid down for itself.

And this brings up again the crucial question of Russia and the United States. No embargo against arms and credit for Japan, no pressure of any sort by the League, can be effective unless those two great and interested nations actively collaborate in the support of it. And collaborate they should! The Soviet Government's opposition to Japanese aggression is based on obvious grounds of security and self-interest. The United States has equally strong reasons for opposing Japan's imperial designs, and Stimson went far ahead of the League in formulating that attitude of disapproval. Both nations should waste no time in letting the League know that they are ready to join in such action as is proposed.

To do this involves no commitments under the Covenant. Very carefully the Committee of Nineteen pointed out Japan's violation of the Nine-Power Treaty and the Pact of Paris. The United States and Russia would be committed only to a consideration of the means to be employed in enforcing binding agreements which both have signed. Such an announcement, following promptly upon the acceptance by the Assembly of the recommendations now before it, would at least have the effect of notifying Japan that her conquests in China will henceforth meet the opposition of the world. The forms such opposition would take can only be determined by the combined counsels of the great Powers—in and out of the League.

The Railroad Report

THE long-awaited report of the National Transportation Committee, in spite of the conservative quality of most of its recommendations, was disappointing to Wall Street, and railroad securities declined following its publication. This is partly because such commissions are almost invariably expected to produce some magical solution of the problem they deal with, while the actual report almost invariably fails to produce this magical solution. More specific reasons for Wall Street's disappointment in the present instance are the committee's failure to make any definite statement on railway wages—it pointed out that these are "determinable by established procedure in another forum"—and its comparative realism in discussing railway securities. Though the committee was actually formed at the request of various business associations, savings banks, insurance companies, and other institutions with a direct interest in railway securities, it nevertheless says flatly:

> We distinctly do not believe that past mistakes as represented by present unwieldy debt structures should be salvaged by increased rates. The present debt structure must be revised and losses written off.

Few of the recommendations of the committee are new, some of them are obvious, and some have already been made several times by the Interstate Commerce Commission. One of the committee's four "emergency recommendations" is that the recapture clause should be repealed retroactively; the I. C. C. has long advocated such repeal. Other recommendations of the committee are that waterway and automotive transportation competing with the railroads should also be put under federal control, that competing water lines should not be subsidized, that competing motor trucks should bear their fair burden of taxes, and that railways should be permitted to operate their own supplemental motor-truck and bus services at competitive rates. With some modification this course has also been recommended by the I. C. C. The

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first of the committee's four emergency recommendations—revision of bankruptcy procedure—is already incorporated in bills now before Congress. The fourth asks for a more liberal interpretation by the R. F. C. of the act governing its loans to railways; the committee nowhere questions the wisdom of continuing to supply the railroads with federal funds.

Two recommendations call for special comment—that advocating a change in the statutory rule of rate-making, and that advocating railway consolidations "looking eventually to a single national system." The whole section on rate-making is vague and ill-considered. The committee proposes to abandon all the results of railway valuation and the principle of "fair return" on actual prudent investment for the following principle:

> Wherever there is fair economic competition it will decide the rate question and it should be permitted to do so freely. . . . Where competition with trucks and other methods exists, it will determine rates. In other cases rates must be regulated, but the basis of costs of operation under efficient management is a better general guide than any attempt to preserve capital structures regardless of economic trends. We see no reason why the rate-making rule should not say in plain English that railroads are entitled to make a reasonable profit based upon costs of efficient operation.

Whatever plausibility this rule of rate-making has is based upon the vagueness of its crucial terms. What is "fair" economic competition? If rates are to be determined by "competition," and not by a federal body, what difference would there be between the resulting condition and the chaos of rate wars, secret rebates, and charging "what the traffic will bear" which prevailed before the I. C. C. was established? Rates, of course, must be high enough to exceed railroad operating expenses under "normal" conditions, but it is not easy to secure agreement upon what constitutes "efficient management," and even if standards for such management were established, what would be a "reasonable" profit based upon such "costs of efficient operation"? The "reasonableness" of the profit could not be established apart from some valuation of the capital invested in the roads.

Perhaps the most significant recommendation of the whole report is that urging that "regional consolidations should be hastened, and, where necessary, enforced, looking eventually to a single national system." But the committee does not draw the logical corollary of this—government management and ownership. From the standpoint of management, it would obviously be unsatisfactory and inefficient for the single system to be controlled by one set of managing managers, half of whose acts would be constantly subject to veto by another set of regulating managers, who, in turn, would have neither control over nor responsibility for the other half of the acts of the managing managers. And from the standpoint of ownership, it would obviously never be possible for the federal government to compel the railroads to unite in one system, and to settle the endless squabbles and dickering among security-holders of various railroads concerning the basis of exchange for their securities, unless the government itself were to set up a commission to establish the valuations at which securities should be turned in, made it mandatory to turn them in, and gave the security-holder in return shares of common stock in the single system with a rate of dividend depending on earnings. This is the real logic of the railroad crisis and of the committee's report.

The "Met" in Difficulties

THE Metropolitan Opera House is faced, not merely with difficulties, but with the imminent possibility of closing its doors. Last year Paul D. Cravath headed a group which took over the responsibility of financing the organization for one season more, but Mr. Cravath has just announced that he considers his responsibility ended. As a last resort the general public is asked to contribute a guaranty fund of $300,000.

At first sight the appeal to the public seems natural and reasonable. Actually, however, it is being made a little bit late, and the simple truth of the matter is that the Metropolitan Opera has not previously paid any too much attention to the public. The inhabitants of the "diamond horseshoe" have generally regarded the opera as a private playhouse to which outsiders were tolerantly permitted a limited access. Prices for good seats were so high as to rule out all but the affluent; cheap seats were neither good nor plentiful; and no serious effort was ever made to put the institution on a solid foundation by providing accommodation for that part of the great public which wanted to come. Indeed, it is only a short time ago that the directors rather arrogantly vetoed Otto Kahn's proposal to move the opera to a new building which would make a place for the popular audience. Now the public is being thought of as a last resort only.

Last year broadcasting of the performances was permitted for the first time. According to Deems Taylor, four or five million persons tune in every Saturday afternoon, and Mr. Taylor suggests that if only a fourth or fifth of these listeners would impose upon themselves a voluntary tax of one cent for each performance, that tax alone would support the opera. As a matter of fact, his proposal would be rather difficult to realize in practice, and there does not seem to be any good reason why the broadcasting companies should not themselves be compelled to pay to the government a reasonable tax, part of which could be used to support a national opera. These companies receive privileges of tremendous value for which they give a wholly inadequate return. The Radio Commission assigns them exclusive "channels," from the use of which some of them make tremendous profits; yet they pay very little for what they get.

In the unlikely possibility that they should be called to account, there would still, however, be left the open question whether an opera would be the most culturally useful institution which the government could support. Theoretically it is the highest of the arts—the result of a perfect marriage between music and drama. Actually it is only the most fantastically expensive of the arts (except the moving picture!) and holds its position partly at least because the extravagance of its traditions makes it the most suitable plaything of the fashionable. In America it has never been genuinely popular and has rarely been looked upon more than dubiously by the most competent musicians. It justifies itself if it meets a genuine demand, as it does in Italy, where Verdi is popular almost in the sense that Irving Berlin is popular here. But there is some question just how much it is worth while to try to educate a public up to "Il Trovatore." A symphony orchestra costs infinitely less to support. It is also worth considerably more.

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Issues and Men

By Bus Through the Middle West

THERE were three of us in the bus traveling from Madrid, Iowa, to Des Moines, one being the driver. Next to me was the man who started the first "farmers' holiday" in that State, the man above all others I should have chosen to talk with during that trip of an hour and a half had I known in advance of his existence. He explained that he was bound to the capital on an insurance matter; the insurance companies are in trouble, at least the farmers' mutual fire-insurance companies. "We have had to assess our policy-holders—our August loss was $55,000 more than the largest previous monthly loss in our history. There is a lot of arson going on around here," he went on, "but I don't blame the farmers. If you were as desperate for money as they are, you'd burn a chicken-house, or a garage, or a barn, or even your house, as they sometimes do, to get clothes and shoes for your children. We just don't know what we are going to do, but I'll tell you this, we want the Eastern bankers to stay over in their country and leave us alone in the West. They can have their gold if they can keep it, but we are going to hold on to our farms. We had a tax sale not far from here on the fourth of January; there were 1,800 farmers there. They said they weren't making any threats, and weren't going to do anybody any harm, but that the first fellow who made a bid on any of those properties would go right out of the first-story window. That sale was postponed."

"How are things with you yourself?" I ventured. "Well," said he, "I have a wife and three children. I keep a careful record of every cent we spend, even when we put out a nickel for chewing gum, and last year $808.34 passed through our hands. Ordinarily our purchasing power runs between $3,000 and $3,400 a year. I had fine crops, got in lots of corn and have a cellar full of vegetables, but you can't get anything for them. I am burning my corn in my furnace right now. It is just as cheap as to sell it for four or five cents a bushel after a long haul to the nearest town, and then to buy coal with what you get. I know it's a rotten deal for the coal miner, but what can I do? My daughter has been trying for a job for two years and she can't get anything."

Then I asked the question that I asked more often than any other during my sixteen days in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin: "What will be the conditions here if this crisis lasts two years longer?" I had already put the question that morning to the restaurant keeper who served me my breakfast. "Two years more?" he had echoed. "Why, we just can't stand it. There won't be any town left if that's going to be the case. Folks are moving out now." The originator of the "farmers' holiday" looked equally staggered. "Why, you just can't think," he said, "what things will look like if this goes on that long. But I can tell you one thing, the farmers aren't going to lose their farms and they aren't going to let anyone take them away from them. We don't want to make any trouble, but we are going to stay on our farms, and don't you make any mistake about it." "Of course," he added, "what we need is leadership, but that will be here within six months." "Where will it come from?" I asked. "I don't know," he said, "but there is going to be a leader within six months, you can be absolutely certain of that. This country has never failed to produce a leader in an emergency, and this is an emergency all right."

The next day at Des Moines Henry Wallace of *Wallaces' Farmer,* who is still under consideration for Secretary of Agriculture in Mr. Roosevelt's Cabinet, said to me: "You must go to Iowa Falls and talk with John Wirds. That man's got the making of a Mussolini in him. Don't you leave Iowa without seeing him." I went, but not until I had also talked with Milo Reno, the head of the Farmers' Union. I found him ready for a third-party movement, but he thought it ought to originate in the West where men on the farms are face to face with the actual realities of life, face to face with the possibility that they may lose their farms tomorrow morning. Yes, he was willing to give the Roosevelt Administration a chance for a showdown, but it would have to prove where it stood very quickly indeed, and he had very little hope that it would work out from under the domination of Wall Street. If it didn't make good, he was certain of one thing—a new movement would sweep the West; the farmer could stand it no longer. "Are there many people starving on the farms?" I asked. "No, there are not, but the conditions are absolutely unendurable, and the farmer is going to hold on to his land no matter what happens."

I found John Wirds in his courtroom—he is a judge of the Superior Court—trying to save the farm of a seventy-five-year-old member of his family. When he had freed himself from that task he gave me of his time unrestrictedly until after eleven o'clock that evening. No Mussolini here, but a man with great strength in his powerful though unhandsome visage. He volunteered for the war and then came back determined to get a college education. He put himself through college and graduated from the law school at the age of twenty-eight, having supported a wife and two children with the wife's aid, and winning only "A's" in his law studies. It takes character to do that, and readiness to live on extremely humble fare. Now he has organized 90 per cent of the farmers of his county in his union, and the movement is spreading into adjoining counties. From one of the latter there came to him one morning five telephonic appeals for help. There was trouble at the county seat; there were ropes in the crowd, and there was certain to be violence if he did not come to their aid. He adjourned his court, jumped into his automobile, and drove at full speed for the place—in time to prevent bloodshed, in time to see the discomfited mortgage-holder withdraw in haste. About 250 members of the crowd followed him into one of the rooms of the courthouse and asked what he thought of the proceeding. He told them that he did not like what they had done; they had not done enough for the mortgagee, and they had not insisted that the owner of the farm should pledge himself to do what he could to pay something, however little, to the mortgagee. The crowd was stunned. "We are running this thing along Golden Rule

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lines," said John Wirds, "and we are going to be just as square about it as we can possibly be." The crowd at once began to take up a collection for the mortgage-holder; $250 was the objective.

"No," said John Wirds to me, "there's no suffering on the farms if you mean by that hunger. We see to that; our committees go out and do relief work. We can't give them the clothes they need, or the children the necessary boots, but we can keep them from starving, and we're going to. We're not aiming at the government, but we are just going to take care of ourselves and our own, and we're going to keep every fellow on the farm who deserves to be there." "What will be the situation two years from now?" "Why, something will break; something will happen; there will have to be a change in the system. Aren't you going to give us a lead in the East? We are never going back into the Republican Party, we Iowa farmers; it is dead, dead, dead. We want a new deal and a square deal."

That night he drove me, masterfully, to Mason City. I told him that when my bus had stopped that morning in a small town, the people were standing around in knots of four and five. "They're having a grand time in this town today," the motor-bus driver had said as he climbed into his seat. "The only bank they've got is just bust." Mr. Wirds laughed. "All our five banks are gone in Iowa Falls; we haven't one left. The express company takes our checks down to Des Moines and cashes them, and we manage to barter with one another, exchange checks, and do what we can."

The next day on to Minnesota, the farmhouses growing more unkempt, the countryside less prosperous looking, and then St. Paul and Minneapolis. Minneapolis is proud that it raised about a million and a half dollars for its community chest, that it has been able so far to take care of its own. But when I put my question to three of the leading business men of Minneapolis, they could not conceal their dismay. "Minneapolis will get by somehow, but our businesses, the country—what *will* become of them in two years?" One of these gentlemen has a 30,000-acre farm. He sold it a few years ago; it has come back to him; much against his will he is establishing a tenantry upon it. I asked him whether he foreclosed or dispossessed. "Never," said he, "when a man shows good faith and does his best." But he confessed that he did not see what was ahead for any of them. From others I learned that of the 800 Minnesota banks 200 are able to operate only through an agreement with the depositors that for the next five years they will withdraw only 10 per cent of their deposits each year. Well-informed men tell me that if there is no improvement, 500 of the 800 banks will be on the same basis by next fall. Everywhere I heard the Reconstruction Finance Corporation praised for standing by Charlie Dawes's bank: "If they hadn't done it, hundreds of banks would have failed in the West and Northwest." I found one town that faced the future absolutely unafraid—Eau Claire, Wisconsin. According to its leading editor it has not felt the crisis for longer than a year and it will have no difficulty in fighting its way through for two or three years more. One of its factories is running full time.

Everywhere else I went there were the same stories of blasted homes, ruined banks, wrecked existences; men and women have seen the labors and savings of a lifetime go to nothing as if overnight. A terrible feeling of fear and insecurity has come over the great rural stretches. People no longer feel safe; the dread of each day is upon them even though their cellars are full of unsold corn and vegetables. Their children are marking time; they themselves have nothing to look forward to; there is nothing left of any security for old age. They are puzzled, deeply disturbed, profoundly outraged—stunned that such a disaster could come to "God's country." They have no desire to turn against the flag. The farmer organizations are not against the government as such. They are standing unitedly against the Wall Street front; they believe, as did Woodrow Wilson in 1912, that the financial system under which we have been living, operated as it has been by those Mr. Wilson called "the masters of privilege, the owners of big business," has been "slowly girdling the tree that bears the inestimable fruits of our life," and that, as he prophesied, "nature has taken her revenge," because they have entirely girdled the tree and the tree is dying. They are no longer afraid of the name socialism, and they tell you frankly that there would have been hundreds of thousands of votes in that section for Norman Thomas had they not felt that the all-important thing was to sweep Herbert Hoover out of office. In all three States—Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota—newspapermen told me that they had never guessed how deep the feeling was against the President, or how high the tidal wave against him would go. People tell you frankly that the Democratic Party not only has but a short time in which to make good, but that it must demonstrate once and for all that it stands for the people against the "interests," and that they will turn to the Socialists, or Huey Long, or anybody else who will take the lead toward a new political and social order.

But whither, whither? That is the question. They see life on the farms dying, their crops going for so little it does not pay to market them; they see milk selling for three cents a quart, which doesn't pay the feed bill; they see the children dropping out of school for lack of adequate clothing, and the schools in danger of closing because the teachers can no longer be paid. They see the small towns drooping, bank after bank closing, although they were told that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation had, or would, put an end to further bank failures. They see paralysis descending upon the small towns—more and more "to let" signs appearing in the empty shop windows. Their patience is magnificent; their resignation, if anything, too great. If the farmers are acting through their organizations, which may be best described as benevolent protective associations, the people of the small towns are voiceless, unorganized, unable to act in common. But not for long, certainly not for two years. It does not seem to me after those days in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota that they will see their neighborhood die by inches without some protest. They know that things are getting worse. Not a single conductor on bus or train would tell me that things are getting better; the trains are pitiful in their emptiness; the highways are beginning to be deserted. "What has become," asked a railroad conductor pathetically, "of American enterprise, energy, and invention?" What, indeed? And what has become of our leadership in the face of the destitution in our cities, our stricken countryside, the misery of our people?

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Paralysis and Profits

By STEWART GRISCOM

THE precise responsibility incurred by a university for the ultimate control of life-saving and therapeutic devices developed by members of its own staff in its own laboratories has never been clearly defined. We are apt to take it for granted that these things are dedicated automatically to the common cause of humanity; that they are not monopolized to line private pockets but are available to anyone who can use them to advantage in the war with disease. And this, in fact, has usually been the case. Sometime during the next few months, however, if the present schedule is carried out, the history of a life-saving invention in which business and benevolence became confused will be told in the federal court at Boston. It is a curious story. Harvard University is the setting; leading scientists play the parts. The plot concerns the commercialization of an invention for the relief of human suffering and the efforts of certain persons to protect their monopoly by ruthlessly suppressing competition.

The events preliminary to the suit have stirred the Harvard Medical School. While few of the staff understand the legal technicalities of the alleged infringement, they are clear about the professional ethics involved. Indeed, a group of prominent faculty members are actively endeavoring to prevent the court proceedings which they fear will reflect on the reputation of the institution. They also hope to block the recurrence of such a contretemps through the adoption of some accepted code.

In 1929 Philip Drinker, associate professor of industrial hygiene and member of the faculty of the Harvard Engineering School, was engaged in research on pneumatic life-saving machines in the laboratory of the Harvard School of Public Health. He was subsidized in this work by the Consolidated Gas Company of New York and, it is fair to assume, was supported and encouraged by his brother, Dr. Cecil K. Drinker, assistant dean and professor of physiology in the School of Public Health. Dr. Drinker is reputed to be a power to be reckoned with in the inner circles of the university. The experimental machines were made in the machine-shop of the Harvard Medical School, which was under the direction of Dr. C. K. Drinker. In the course of this investigation, Philip Drinker was inspired to build a box in which the creation of varying atmospheric pressures would assist the respiration of victims of infantile paralysis whose respiratory muscles were incapacitated. Accounts differ as to what first suggested the idea, but it seems to be admitted that the idea was not strictly original. Drinker did, nevertheless, produce a practical apparatus and announced the fact in May, 1929.

It was a crude device. Noisy vacuum-cleaner blowers were used to exhaust the air; it included no hand pump to be used in case the electric current failed; it was geared to permit only a few respiration rates; and it was fitted with intricate fastenings which interfered with the rapid introduction of patients in emergencies. In spite of these deficiencies the machine was a real asset to life-saving technique and was welcomed by the medical profession. Philip Drinker and Louis Agassiz Shaw, who had collaborated with him on the invention, at once applied for a patent, which was finally granted in December, 1931, two years after the date of application. From this time on Shaw has been out of the picture.

During this two-year interim, in the spring of 1931, a new figure entered the picture. It was John Haven Emerson, humanist and inventor, with a gift for mechanics approaching genius and delighting in the development of delicate and accurate scientific apparatus. He was twenty-five years old, a son of Dr. Haven Emerson of Columbia University, and the proprietor of a rather unique machine-shop located above Campbell and Sullivan's fish emporium in Harvard Square, Cambridge. The establishment is an excellent projection of its owner's personality. The little office, up two gloomy flights from the entrance, is obviously of minor importance in the proprietor's mind. Dusty, cluttered with papers, with a few schedules pinned to the walls in a casual attempt at office system, it boasts of a double desk for the boss and his chief of staff and a child's stool for visitors. There is no clerk or stenographer. Emerson himself answers the telephone—if he is within hearing. The ordered activity of the shop which occupies the rest of the floor provides a startling contrast. It is staffed by four associates (they would hardly recognize themselves as "employees"), all of whom are nearly as unordinary as their chief. Several are Harvard graduates or near graduates. There is no shop discipline. In emotional moments they may shout for "Jack" or burst into fervent song. The Emersonian collaborators include David L. Garrison and Maxfield Parrish, Jr. The output of this organization is extremely catholic. It specializes in complex apparatus such as the Barcroft-Warburg device for cancer research, the Emerson portable oxygen tent, the Emerson micro-manipulator for controlling micro instruments under any degree of magnification (it took Emerson five years to perfect it and it is used by research institutions in this country and abroad), and the Emerson diaphragm respirator. But in slack times the shop is not above making a pair of hinges or supplying an odd screw to a student repairing a second-hand typewriter.

It was in the spring of 1931 that Emerson first saw the Drinker respirator in operation at the Children's Hospital in Boston. Some members of the staff pointed out certain weaknesses in the machine and suggested that he figure out remedies. He said he would think about the problem, and a little later he talked to Drinker about the possibility of substituting a new type of blower. Drinker was not interested. Until that time Emerson had no thought of building a respirator. He now began to play with the notion of a machine which should embody all his projected improvements. Emerson says that the idea appealed to him as a challenge in applied mechanics and that he had no suspicion Drinker might object. Those who know him accept this statement. The device was designed to save life, and this, in his mind, precluded commercial jealousy. That Drinker's machine was not yet patented and that it seemed doubtful if it ever would be, was irrelevant. He probably would have proceeded with the improvements in any case.

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The Emerson respirator was completed in July, 1931. It was far superior to the Drinker product. Instead of a blower it employed a silent leather diaphragm. It was adjustable to any respiration rate. The cost was $1,000 instead of $2,300 or $2,000, the price of the other apparatus. That summer an epidemic of poliomyelitis swept New England, and one of the early models was left for trial at the Providence City Hospital. The next day it was put in use to save the life of a desperately paralyzed boy, Emerson and Garrison standing by to demonstrate the mechanism in operation.

This dramatic success marked the beginning of Drinker's open hostility. He was bitter at what he evidently felt was an invasion of the respirator market and spoke of legal protection against infringements. His objurgations were echoed by one Collins, of Warren E. Collins, Inc., manufacturers of medical apparatus, who by this time had acquired the exclusive rights to manufacture Drinker's machine. Collins, in fact, had been turning our respirators and paying royalties to Drinker long before the patent was issued. Drinker admits that he received a part of the profits, but neither he nor the manufacturer has ever announced their receipts. The only clue to the amount which the inventor pocketed comes from Collins, who once complained that he was forced to pay a royalty of $300 on each sale. Accepting this as fact, and estimating that at least 150 machines had been sold when Drinker renounced his bonus in the fall of 1931, it is easy to see that the inventor had not fared badly. The payment of royalties, of course, would not exhaust the respirator's financial possibilities. Taking into account a subsequent reduction in the price of the Drinker machine, and considering the average price to be $1,750 instead of $2,000, it is clear that Collins must have banked at least $262,500 in gross receipts when he stopped his payments to Drinker.

Up to this point Drinker and Collins fought alone for their monopoly. When Emerson declined to weaken and continued manufacturing in spite of threats and remonstrances, officials of the university intervened. Whether they did this deliberately, with knowledge of the facts, is not known. This phase of the story is mysterious and confused. Principals operate vaguely through agents. There are enigmatic whisperings and unintelligible movements behind an impenetrable curtain. Emerson and his friends have been unable to obtain an explanation of these activities. In any event, after some preliminary correspondence, Emerson and his father called on Dr. David L. Edsall, the dean of the Medical School, and placed all the facts before him as Emerson knew them. Deprecating the controversy, Dr. Edsall asked Emerson as a favor to the university to withhold all commercial advertising about his machine for a period of two weeks. The Harvard Corporation, he explained, had the disposal of the patent rights under advisement and it seemed probable that eventually they would be turned over to the public with only enough control to insure reliable workmanship.

To this proposal Emerson agreed. Some two weeks later the Dean wrote him a noncommittal letter stating that the corporation was still discussing the problem. After another three weeks had passed and Emerson had grown restive, Edsall sent another communication similar to the first but without suggesting release from the obligation to refrain from advertising. Exactly nine days later Warren E. Collins, Inc., announced the completion of a new model respirator selling at $1,500. The design was a great improvement over the earlier Drinker apparatus. This was less surprising when it developed that every mechanical change, without exception, which the Collins concern thought worthy of featuring in their new advertising material had appeared first in Emerson's machine. When, in the face of this performance, the university maintained an attitude of indifferent silence, Emerson decided to call on the Dean. Edsall released Emerson from his promise not to advertise but begged him to keep the story from the public. Emerson countered by asking whether the university proposed to exert its influence in creating a monopoly of life-saving devices for the financial benefit of favored individuals. If this was the policy, he said, he would ignore the patent and fight. The Dean replied that the matter was not in the university's hands. The next day, determined to get at the root of the matter, Emerson talked with President Lowell. Mr. Lowell had little to say except to reproach him for interfering with "the purely altruistic action of Mr. Drinker." He stated that the university had no control over the Drinker patent.

Four months later the Collins corporation entered suit for infringement. This is now pending. It seems to many physicians who are familiar with the facts that the ethical importance of this affair entirely transcends the legal equities. They believe that the right to manufacture therapeutic or life-saving devices developed in a university should be available to anyone who can guarantee reliability and a reasonable price. The value of Emerson's machine is unquestioned. Experts who have examined both report that the Emerson product is at least as efficient and reliable as the Drinker device. And, finally, the Emerson respirator has been officially accepted by the Council on Physical Therapy of the American Medical Association. There can be no better testimony as to its value.

As for price, the Emerson device has always sold for at least $500 less than the Drinker apparatus. Curiously enough, this point is the one which seems chiefly to agitate the Collins concern. Although the Collins attorneys announced that "unlike many patent suits in which the maintenance of royalties is a chief point at issue, it is stated that the present suit is being prosecuted solely in the interests of public safety," they have recently sought a settlement under which Emerson would pay a 10 per cent royalty on the sale price of each machine and agree to a price-fixing arrangement. It is hard to see how the interests of the public would be served by such an agreement.

Another practical consideration, apart from purely ethical grounds, is the opinion of various authorities on poliomyelitis that both Collins and Emerson should continue to manufacture. In the event of a serious epidemic of infantile paralysis, they say, it would be impossible for either concern to produce all the apparatus which might be required. Healthy competition, furthermore, usually stimulates the development of improvements.

Whatever the outcome of this particular controversy, there can be no doubt that the rights of the community in cases like this should be protected by some accepted code. The exemption of educational institutions from taxation implies contingent obligations. It has been suggested that therapeutic and life-saving devices developed in colleges should be patented and that these patents should then be transferred to an inter-institutional commission empowered to license all worthy applicants. Almost any plan which would preclude selfish monopolies and unreasonable private profits would be preferable to the present unsatisfactory condition.

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Big Business Cries for Help

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, February 18

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S indomitable optimism will be subjected to worse trials than attempts on his life before he has the Presidential chair very warm. It is difficult to recall any man in modern times who has been required to shoulder such terrific responsibilities. Lenin, it is true, planned and initiated the transformation of a medieval agricultural empire into a cooperative industrial commonwealth, but Lenin had inherited the blueprints of a dozen political geniuses, and he had brilliant collaborators. Roosevelt will have to plow much new ground, and it becomes more apparent every day that he is expected to do it almost single-handed. It is difficult to see how the federal government can get the country out of its plight without complete and intelligent cooperation from those who control its wealth. Yet our vaunted "wizards" of finance and industry today are the most thoroughly discredited class of individuals in the country; not one of them has advanced an idea worth a plugged nickel. After spouting all over the place for ten years about "political inefficiency" and the necessity of the government "keeping its hands off business," they are now crawling here in droves and entreating the despised politicians to rescue them from the consequences of their own stupidity and corruption. The next President can expect little assistance from them. Moreover, Congress, buffeted between its own problems and the ignorant and malicious criticism with which it has been overwhelmed, is half in a mood to surrender. Even the Senate, the most virile and independent of our political institutions, is pretty well cowed. Obviously we are on the eve of what in many respects will amount to a Presidential dictatorship. I would as soon trust Roosevelt with such powers as almost anyone I can think of, but the prospect has its dangers along with its advantages. For instance, two years of a Hoover dictatorship probably would reconcile the populace to the delays and inconveniences of democracy, but it is possible that Roosevelt may exercise his authority with such wisdom and restraint that the public will be content with an autocrat. It is a risky step and the strongest argument for it is that unless we voluntarily accept Roosevelt as a dictator now, we may be compelled involuntarily to accept someone like General MacArthur a year or two hence. The average citizen probably would be astonished to learn about some of the fancy ideas with which our brass hats have been toying. I understand they are so eager to quell the revolution that they can hardly wait for it to start. This week we were edified by the spectacle of a new type of armored tank, "especially adapted for riot duty," on display at the War Department. We may rely on Roosevelt to put a prompt end to that dangerous brand of nonsense.

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THE necessity of an executive dictatorship, if one exists, may be attributed very largely to the newspapers, which have slandered Congress with such persistence and effect that the public has either lost confidence in the legislative arm of the government, or it has lost confidence in itself, or both. An amazing example of this wholesale vilification occurred recently in connection with the dismissal of David S. Barry, Senate sergeant-at-arms. After refusing an offer of time in which to retain counsel and prepare his explanation, this employee repeatedly confessed to the Senate and its Judiciary Committee that he had accepted $250 to write a magazine article accusing members of Congress of taking bribes, although he had no proof and no idea whether any existed. Naturally, the Senate dismissed him. Whereupon it was buried under an avalanche of editorial abuse, many of the papers insinuating that the bribery charge was true, and most of them declaring that poor Barry had been immolated by demagogues. As a matter of fact, the most notorious Senate demagogues had promptly rushed to Barry's defense, uttering fearful cries about "the right of trial by jury," "Anglo-Saxon traditions," and "freedom of speech." Long-haired Senator Logan of Kentucky, who last year opposed an investigation of the outrages in Bell and Harlan counties, denounced the Barry proceedings as "mob law," but after vowing to Almighty God that this crime could only be consummated over his prostrate form, went home to dinner without waiting for the roll call, although two days later he contributed a resounding moral treatise on the subject to the front page of the New York *Times!* All this unfair and ignorant criticism is having at least one beneficial effect—it is compelling Congress to consider seriously the evils of irresponsible radio broadcasting. Newspapers, after all, are private commercial enterprises, but the radio is a public utility, and Congressmen are beginning to inquire how much longer those precious channels shall be devoted to the dangerous and demagogic ranting of such persons as Edwin C. Hill and Boake Carter. Their unintelligent comment on public men and measures is offensive enough, but when it comes to using public property (which these channels are) for the purpose of fomenting war with Japan and inflaming national, sectional, and religious prejudice, it is high time the Federal Radio Commission took a hand. Otherwise, a higher authority will.

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OLD Guard Republicans in the Senate, who for weeks have been conducting a slow filibuster with the object of embarrassing and discrediting the Democrats, were somehow induced to withdraw their paralyzing influence momentarily, with the result that the Senate, to the surprise of itself and everyone else, adopted the prohibition-repeal resolution. I suspect some slick work on the part of Joe Robinson and Charlie McNary, the latter, unlike Watson and Moses, being unwilling to see the country go to hell in a hack for the satisfaction of saying later that the Democrats drove the hack. Moreover, as the result of heroic efforts on the part of La Follette, Costigan, Cutting, and Wagner, the leaders were persuaded to adopt the eminently sensible course of laying aside pending appropriation bills and taking up the problem of relief. Notwithstanding that less than two weeks of the session remains, it is possible for something to be accomplished. Even the filibusterers shivered when the bank holi-

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day was declared in Michigan. I am a reporter, not an economist, and yet this depression seems fairly simple to me. Purchasing power has been destroyed by unemployment, and the cure is to put men back to work. If it is true, as has repeatedly been said, that our chief weapon against the depression is the credit of the federal government, why not use it in attacking the heart of the trouble? Instead of wasting it in a futile attempt to prop up a lot of crumbling capital structures, why not devote it to financing the purchase of commodities by the unemployed, as provided in the Costigan-La Guardia bill, and to launching a gigantic program of public works, as advocated by Wagner, La Follette, and others? Put that question to some "captain of finance," and all you will get in reply will be a meaningless jumble of words. Tom Connally remarked the other day: "All they ever knew was to lend you a dime on a dollar's worth of security, and charge you 10 per cent interest."

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THE pathetic sight which these erstwhile "leaders" make was heightened this week by the appearance of some of the most prominent before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, which is investigating the stock market, and of others before the Finance Committee, which is trying to locate the road back to prosperity. Since several of these witnesses are scheduled to appear before both committees, it was suggested that a good purpose would be served by having them first go before the Banking Committee and tell how they caused the depression, and then go around the corner and tell the Finance Committee how to get out of it. It was also suggested, after several of them had testified, that Pat Harrison had summoned them for the malicious purpose of showing that they didn't know anything. That probably is unfounded: Pat likes a joke, but not at the expense of millionaires. Nevertheless, the proceedings have not been devoid of comedy. There was the spectacle, for example, of Paul Block, Jimmie Walker's old pal, showing up to tell the Senate how to lick the depression. John F. Hylan also was on the list, although, so far as I know, there is no plan to call Gracie Allen or Jockey Gilbert. Fun of a more refined type was on display before the Banking Committee where that magnificent actor and humorist, Owen D. Young, informed the members with many an ingratiating smile and silken gesture, that his purpose in taking 4,000 shares of Insull stock at $12 a share before the market opened at $30, was "to help a friend." Poor Mr. Insull was nervous, he explained, lest some outsider buy up the stock and get control of the organization, so Young obligingly agreed to come in on the ground floor. The man is simply a marvel. If times were less critical I should be reconciled to seeing him in the Cabinet, just for the privilege of watching him perform in public. But there was nothing funny about poor old Charlie Dawes. The familiar theatricals were conspicuously absent from his testimony. He seemed badly licked. For a man who had "damned" and "helled" his way through a dozen Congressional investigations, it was a tough job to sit there meekly and cough up the confession that his bank had violated the principle of the law in lending Insull companies a sum almost equal to the bank's capital and actually greater than its surplus. It would appear that many of the gods of the Coolidge-Mellon era had, in addition to feet of clay, heads of bone. Some of us intimated as much at the time.

The Spread of Barter

By MALCOLM ROSS

BARTER in the United States is no longer a tentative experiment. At present there are 159 barter organizations in 127 cities of 29 States. Perhaps a million people daily receive part of their living through these exchange associations. As the movement has grown it has developed along varied lines and its aims now range from simple relief to the universal substitution of scrip for legal money. In its modern form barter began as a device for permitting the hungry access to surplus crops. Workers were idle and could not buy; food was rotting in the fields because there was no profit in harvesting it. It appeared sensible to set the idle to work as share-croppers. From this simple beginning barter has evolved into complex forms which touch the economic order at vital points. Several associations are already projecting national movements.

Barter as a relief measure has developed on a grand scale in California. Last spring a few men in Compton, California, began to exchange their labor on truck farms for sacks of vegetables—two days' work for a week's supply for a family. The croppers stocked a warehouse with their surplus vegetables and began to exchange with one another. A man paid in celery would exchange some of it for oranges, potatoes, and, eventually, for fish and meat. The system was soon expanded. Cobblers and tailors, doctors and dentists contributed their services to the croppers and were given credit for the variety of services and food available. When other units were formed, jobless radio operators set up communication between the exchanges. Each morning reports went out that this or that exchange had potatoes, dairy products, or mutton in excess of its own needs; whereupon the exchange managers shopped around the circuit for needed goods or services.

The movement has strong public support. The truck farmers obtain labor in exchange for off-grade products. Taxpayers are happy in the knowledge that more than 200,000 jobless people are being cared for without tapping the relief coffers. The exchanges are credited with preventing hunger marches, while their leaders offer assurance that "socialistic trends are conspicuous by their absence." On the assumption that the exchanges are expedients, to be dissolved when the emergency shall pass, much official support has been won. The Los Angeles County supervisors supply oil and gas to move the exchange products. Empty warehouses, old clothes and shoes, and cash for running expenses are provided by persons pleased to see the unemployed helping themselves.

No gentlemen's agreement to remain docile exists among the barter groups of the State of Washington. Here the movement took on a strong political cast as soon as the mem-

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berships attained voting strength. The Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle, oldest of the groups, has 40,000 members and is allied with other exchanges in the United Producers of Washington. Last June 400 delegates of the State organization convened at Tacoma and decided to override opposition office-holders in pursuit of their own aims of direct relief and guaranteed jobs.

Votes of the Seattle group were sufficient to turn the mayoralty election in favor of a sympathizer, John F. Dore. The city became an active collaborator in the movement. It supplies food, trucks, paint, and lumber from public funds, and it averted its official eyes when flying squads of league members tapped the city mains for those unemployed whose water had been cut off. The Washington exchanges are lively and contentious, and worth close attention.

The Unemployed Citizens' League of Colorado, modeled after but not connected with the Washington league, represents an effort to draw organized labor into the barter movement. There are eleven units in Colorado, comprising 45,000 people and marked by a strong resentment against community chests and city charities. They seek political action, and their printing-press is busy with appeals for the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and the Farmers' Union. To the American Federation of Labor the following argument is advanced: The jobless man is a potential scab. Organized labor is confronted with the existence of thousands whose need the unscrupulous employers exploit by taking their labor at bargain rates. Organized labor, therefore, should aid the barter movement.

The Colorado league seeks legislation to enable the unemployed to produce goods and food for themselves. They promise to consume all they produce in order not to compete in the open market. The league has a few coal mines and it sends members out as share-croppers; but it is much poorer than the Washington associations. Barter on a large scale flourishes best in sections where crop surpluses are easily accessible. The California exchanges are particularly favored. They have the most essential commodity, food, as warehouse goods against which other supplies and services can be bartered. Wherever crops are less abundant, as in Colorado, the exchanges must produce such commodities as coal or timber, which compete with the products of established firms and arouse opposition.

This dilemma is perhaps best shown in the Dayton, Ohio, Association of Cooperative Production Units. In their phraseology, they wish to substitute "producing-using" for "earning-buying." Their aim is to organize the unemployed, the old, cripples, and other dependents into neighborhood groups whose industry will provide articles having value both for exchange with other groups and for sale in the open market. Actually, some 800 families are at work in seven units, engaged variously in gardening, canning, raising rabbits for fur and meat, baking, cobbling, and making quilts. One group is building a shoe factory out of discarded wood paving blocks. Eventually the association hopes to move the units into the country to farm and to begin the manufacture of rugs, blankets, rabbit-skin caps, and so on.

In theory, a wide-enough variety of products and services for exchange between groups would make them independent of the regular markets. In present practice the production units exist by grace of city aid. The Council of Social Agencies lends them money. The city relief store provides raw material which the units pay for by adding the value of their labor and then giving back part of the finished products. It seems evident that the units could not at present get along without a subsidy. It remains to be seen whether they can outgrow the need for aid, and can meet the inevitable opposition of conventional producers.

Instead of starting new industries the Midwest Exchange, Inc., of Yellow Springs, Ohio, brings existing producers together. Each member carries on an ordinary sales-for-cash business in the open market, but barters his surplus with other exchange members. A rubber manufacturer puts tires into the common pool, accepting in return printing, foundry work, and labor put up by other firms in order to establish credit. Antioch College is a Midwest member, since it is a producer with a printing shop, commercial research laboratory, and other facilities needing a larger market. Arthur E. Morgan, president of Antioch, helped found the Midwest Exchange, partly as an outlet, through barter, for college industries and partly because he believes that barter between manufacturers has an important future.

The Yellow Springs Exchange is an independent unit giving a retail outlet to the wholesalers in the Midwest Exchange. In theory each producer should have a retail auxiliary in which employees can spend the scrip they receive as part of their pay. Actually the Yellow Springs Exchange is the only retail unit in operation. It issues scrip, which it pays out to Midwest members for goods, and which it accepts for retail purchases made by Midwest employees. Besides functioning as a Midwest auxiliary, the Yellow Springs Exchange barters with farmers for scrip and goods, and has the services of workmen to offer. This combination of the Yellow Springs and Midwest exchanges is considered by its founders as a first step toward making barter so important in any region that business can be conducted smoothly no matter how serious the collapse of the money market may be. The extension of the scheme on a national scale is projected.

The tendency to make local exchanges the nuclei of a national system has appeared in many places. The Natural Development Association of Utah has a strong missionary leaning toward replacing the present money system with universal barter. It would bring existing producers into the fold, enter the producing field itself, and become self-contained and independent of all regular financial agencies. In diversification the Utah exchanges have gone farther than any of the groups, and great local success has widened their hopes.

In New York the Emergency Exchange Association, with economists, lawyers, and engineers on its advisory board, is offering its services and advice to all exchanges. It looks toward the organization of a national string of barter groups.

An aspect of barter common to all groups is the use of relief money to furnish the unemployed with raw materials on which they apply their labor to produce goods they themselves will consume. It has been suggested that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation should stop making work for the unemployed on roads and put them to work producing goods for each other. If that suggestion were followed, the United States government would become the biggest barter group in the country. The question is open.

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We're in the Army Now

By OWEN R. LOVEJOY

AMERICA has suddenly become conscious of an army of transient youth. Boys wandering from home present one of the oldest problems in history, but it is only in these days that migrant youth has made the front page. This is partly because normal conduct has recently been invested with mysterious significance by the new psychology and partly because a situation unprecedented in modern times has multiplied the number of boys who leave home.

One can readily understand why some boys forsake the domestic inclosure and take to the open road. The spirit of adventure is strong in youth—indeed, it is one of its cardinal virtues, which from age to age has helped to advance the race. But the spirit of adventure is not alone responsible for the rise of this wandering army which has suddenly become the subject of popular interest and of the solicitude of social-welfare agencies. Loneliness, poverty, school monotony, domestic discord, and broken homes are other important factors. Youth is as conscious as the elders of what Dr. Nels Anderson calls the invasion of the home. "The home was never so insecure, for these people have left their firesides because they were convinced they would be better off on the outside than within." Mrs. Sidney C. Borg fittingly calls them "depression transients."

The futility of attempting to deal with the problem of these "depression transients" as a project distinct from all others should be obvious. It should also be obvious that since these boys, no matter how numerous, do not constitute a homogeneous mass—instead, each is an American individual with his own background, his own emotional reaction to our unusual national plight, his own family traditions, and his own ambitions or lack of them—no kind of mass treatment, however kindly on the one hand or rigid on the other, can hope to succeed. This fact has been recognized in the United States Senate by the members of the Subcommittee on Transients, who have sought advice from educators, physicians, financiers, social workers, and others interested in the problem. Senators La Follette, Costigan, and Cutting, who constitute this subcommittee, recommended an appropriation of $15,000,000 for the relief of transient boys. It was proposed that this fund should be administered by a federal board but that the working out of details should be left to the several States. The plan has been widely approved, and it was generally believed that if any extensive relief measure went through Congress at this session this feature would be sure of inclusion.

The disturbing word now comes that the War Department, in order to make up for the much-lamented reduction in the military appropriation, has obtained an additional appropriation of $20,000,000 as a special fund to be used in placing 88,000 transient boys in citizens' military training camps. Of this amount $5,000,000 is made immediately available. The program undoubtedly is the result of a genuine and sincere conviction, but it is disheartening that this amazing measure passed the Senate without a dissenting vote.

The bill provides, according to the New York *Herald Tribune,* that camps shall be open for a year to the "thousands of youth roaming the land in search of work and a place to sleep." It is estimated that 88,000 boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one will be concentrated in these training camps. Senator Reed of Pennsylvania estimated that the expense of caring for them would be $250 a year for each. The boys will not be forced into these camps, but those who have been out of work for a period of six months may apply for admission and will be accepted if they are American citizens and sound of mind and body.

There are numerous objections to this proposal. While admission to the camp is voluntary, a boy who has entered will have substantially the same care, treatment, drill, exercise, and vocational training that a soldier receives in peace time, though it will be possible for him to leave the camp at any time if he can obtain employment. During this period of training the boys will be under immediate charge of regular army officers, and while no reflection upon the intelligence or general qualifications of these men is intended, it is difficult to suggest a group less well qualified for the instruction and training of youth along any except strictly military lines. The chief objection from the standpoint of the future welfare of these boys is that no constructive educational program can be carried out by mass treatment. At the same time any number of unemployed educators, social workers, recreation directors, and craftsmen are available to furnish individual guidance to the entire number of transient boys, provided they could be distributed in small groups in suitable places throughout the country.

The daily press indicates that the public is aware of the implications of this measure. While these enlisted youths will not be technically included within the military establishment, the country will actually have under training more than double the present number of soldiers in the United States. This emphatic militaristic gesture, made in the name of relief, provides a striking example of the resourcefulness of the military bloc in directing the actual policies of our government at the same time that we are proclaiming to the world our desire to disarm and to be at peace with all mankind.

Under the provisions of the program which is still before the Manufactures Committee of the Senate a federal board would cooperate with agencies in every State to work out plans according to the varied needs in different sections. Among the facilities for care and training immediately available, the following are suggested:

1. In every instance where the boy can wisely be returned to his home this should be done. It cannot be done without the aid of some trained worker who by intimate personal contact can discover the boy's motive in leaving home and the appropriate methods by which he can be returned.

2. There are many distressed farms throughout the country, some in the hands of banks and insurance companies which are eager to liquidate, on which boys in small groups of three to ten could be placed under wise direction and with no cost to the farmer beyond the provision of proper supervision and a home-like atmosphere. This policy has been followed for years by the New York Children's Aid Society with marked success and could be extended.

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3. There are millions of acres of land in America that were once covered with forests and are now either entirely deserted or occupied by struggling farmers who cannot possibly make a living. Thousands of boys could be put to work reforesting these marginal lands and caring for the young trees until they are established, and many others could be engaged as junior forest rangers to safeguard the areas from fire, which now destroys millions of dollars' worth of national resources. It is estimated that within fifty years a program of this kind would enrich the American commonwealth sufficiently to wipe out the national debt.

4. There are hundreds of summer fresh-air camps for children, maintained by public and private philanthropic agencies. Thousands of boys could be placed in these camps in groups not to exceed 100. Under educational, health, and recreational supervision, they could be properly cared for and trained until suitable occupation was found for them.

Certainly the public ought to give careful and deliberate consideration to any plan that uses $20,000,000 of public money to catapult 88,000 of our American boys into United States Army camps at a time when an increased military establishment is the least of our national needs.

Michel de Montaigne: 1533-1933

By JACOB ZEITLIN

WHEN students a few months ago were appraising the work of Spinoza, they dwelt on its importance in liberating the minds of men from the bonds of theology and dogma. It was a work in which Montaigne anticipated him by almost a century. If the ideas of the Frenchman were set down with as direct and naked a simplicity as those of the Jewish philosopher, their originality and boldness would be just as startling. But for all Montaigne's intellectual affinities with Spinoza—it is curious to observe that from his mother's side there flowed in him the blood of the same Spanish Jews from whom Spinoza is descended—he was not made of the stuff which exposes itself to social and moral excommunication for the sake of an inner conviction. His physical security was dear to him, and as a privileged member of the existing order of things he was loth to create an undue disturbance in the thoughts of men. Yet his convictions pressed for utterance. He had an artist's passion for communicating himself, and his literary genius found a way to say what he wished without the risk of dangerous censure. We owe the creation of the personal essay to Montaigne's need for a form of expression which would serve to veil the daring quality of his ideas and act as a lightning-rod against ecclesiastical fulminations.

The celebrated skepticism of Montaigne was chiefly a means of clearing the ground of the aged dogmas and outworn beliefs which encumbered it, of stilling the curiosity of men regarding the metaphysical, the absolute, the supernatural, and the miraculous, as things utterly beyond their grasp. His object was to free the mind for the untrammeled contemplation of all that directly concerned a purely human existence. His riper thinking was distinctly positive in its coloring, so much so that he is sometimes represented as a precursor of Bacon and the scientific method. Yet this is a questionable association. He had too little faith in the power of the mind to comprehend and formulate under general laws the vast and complex diversity of natural phenomena. In view of the state of scientific inquiry in the sixteenth century, his attitude is proof of a critical intelligence rather than of a narrow vision. His position should not be confused with that of a group of thinkers who in the twentieth century persist in regarding science as something alien to man's highest interests. He made no deliberate exclusion of any truth that was certified to man through the exercise of his own natural faculties, or attested to him by the intelligence of an "attentive, subtle, impartial, and unprejudiced inquirer." The scientific quality of his temper is evident from his respect for facts—the facts of history as well as the facts of mental experience.

The feature in Montaigne's work that it is important to stress, if only for the reason that it is too often slighted, is the seriousness of the moral design that underlies it. In a world of dissolving loyalties and unsettled values he tried to discover the principle which would enable men to give some order and meaning to their lives. And he placed that principle ultimately in the conscience of the individual. Overlooking with a dignified silence the faiths and the institutions by which men were supposed to be kept in the path of duty, he quietly but unmistakably proclaimed the idea that every person is an independent moral being, completely responsible to himself, and to himself only, for the regular conduct of his life, and that it is the duty of each man to establish within himself a standard by which to censure or approve his own actions. "Conscience alone," he said, "marks us truly as what we are, and by itself overbalances all other qualities." He believes in man's ability to develop his powers as a free and self-sufficient moral being for whom the constraints of conventional law and organized religion are superfluous. It is an ideal of singular elevation, leading him to declare that there is no private advantage for which a man is justified in doing violence to his conscience, and that not usefulness but beauty is the criterion of a good action.

If Montaigne's vision of human character is conspicuous for its high-mindedness, it is at least equally conspicuous for its balance. The truth on which Aldous Huxley in our own time still finds it necessary to insist so passionately—namely, that man is a physical as well as an intellectual being—was much fresher in the sixteenth century and more in need of statement. And when was it ever stated more succinctly and more judiciously than in this sentence: "It is not a mind, it is not a body, that we are training; it is a man, who ought not to be divided into two parts"? It is the essence of humanism, and if it were taken to heart by all who profess that creed, it would save them from many aberrations. Modern critics who are accustomed to setting up an opposition between nature and man or nature and reason have accused Montaigne of naturalism, but there is little justification for such a charge in his writings. For him nature is simply the all-embracing principle of life. It includes man

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and it includes reason among its manifestations. It includes a great deal besides, which the mind is powerless to fathom. Because of the vastness of the idea which it stands for, the word is apt at times to be employed a little vaguely and with a rhetorical coloring. Primarily Montaigne was concerned with restoring man to his *proper* place in nature. If in moments of satiric bitterness he was tempted to degrade him to the level of the lower animals, it was only through reaction against those who tried to elevate him to a place among the angels. The excesses of intellectualism and spirituality provoked him sometimes to exalt the instinctive elements in life, just as the artifices and affectations of society led him to admire with some extravagance the primitive and spontaneous virtues of the barbarians. In his normal and typical mood Montaigne thought of man as an animal ennobled by the faculty of reason, whose wisdom consisted in knowing how far to yield to "the simple authority of nature," while leaving to his reason the main burden of guiding his inclinations.

In the same humanistic spirit that determines his analysis of human nature, Montaigne makes the beauty and meaning of life consist in an inner quality of consciousness that brings to its owner the greatest satisfaction and serenity of which a man is capable. The great aim of life, in his view, is nothing else than to cultivate the art of living. This can easily be perverted, as has, indeed, been done by unfriendly or undiscerning critics, into a counsel of selfish indulgence and pleasure-loving dilettantism. At times he uses language which gives an opening for such an interpretation, but his ultimate intention is to concentrate the interest on the highest potentialities of our nature. To compose our characters, to teach the soul how to control and circumscribe itself so that our life may glide soberly and silently, "with goodness, moderation, equability, and constancy, and without bustle and ostentation," is not a facile undertaking. It implies an arduous self-discipline. It has, indeed, an old-fashioned air that is uncongenial to the temper of our time, not merely because of its emphasis on serenity, but because the burden of social responsibility weighs with a heavy pressure upon us. "We do not live for ourselves," one of our earnest leaders not long ago remarked, misquoting the ancient sage who had said, "We do not live for ourselves alone." Montaigne would have seized upon the distorted maxim as symptomatic of the great defect in our lives. The trouble, he would have said, is precisely that we live not enough for ourselves and too much for others. To know how to belong to oneself, to reserve a back-shop wholly our own where the soul may live on that which concerns it, he held to be the most important thing in the world. "The principal duty which we have," says Montaigne, "is, to every man his own conduct. That is what we are here for."

Abstracted from its framework, this teaching is seen to have a serious independent value. Its uniqueness, however, lies in the process by which it is unfolded and in the subtle art by which its precepts are insinuated. In reading the "Essays" we are made to feel that we are in the presence not of a system of morals but of a living person engaged in the task of adjusting himself to the conditions of his social and mental environment. His writing is the record of his intellectual growth, and preserves the traces of many hesitations and gropings on the road to the clarification of his judgments. He used the word *essay* originally to denote the uncertainty and the tentative quality of his ideas, and when the ideas were fully matured he deliberately cultivated a method of writing which by its informality should deter the attention from probing them too deeply. The bolder his thoughts became, the more offhand and unsystematic grew his manner of expressing them. He posed before the public as an inoffensive babbler who liked to talk about himself and to indulge himself, out of sheer idleness, in venting strange humors and opinions which he would be sorry to see taken seriously by anybody. While delivering the shrewdest thrusts against superstition and prejudice, he managed to beguile the unwary into accepting him as a charming gossip of lively intelligence and skeptical insouciance. By his "dissolute" style he encouraged the belief in the slackness of his principles. As a literary artist he has imposed himself more fully on the generations of readers than as a moral philosopher, yet in at least one passage he confides to us that he prides himself chiefly on the richness of his substance and that he does not like to hear praise of his style, because it implies a certain disparagement of his sense. The device which he chose for his title-page, in revising the "Essays" shortly before his death, was "Viresque acquirit eundo." It means that the chief object in life for Montaigne was progress in self-mastery. His book shows us how he pursued his ideal.

The Snob Racket

By S. E. MORISON

ONE industry seems to be thriving in these gray days of depression—the snob racket. The mail of the bourgeoisie is filled with appeals to their ego. If you are slipping in the economic race, you may at least dig in socially, for a price. Here is what came to me in three successive morning mails.

The first exhibit is an invitation to be a member of the National Society of Puritan Descendants. This society has many purposes, among which are "to foster patriotic educational research," to "collect records of the Puritans and their progency [*sic*]," "to manifest tribute generally to the early and colonial days," and "to halt the vicious tendencies and philosophies that threaten the very foundation of our national life." (Can this mean Technocracy?) "All that we have today," avers the N. S. P. D., "we owe to the foundations laid by our Puritan forbears. They were the ones to give us our laws, our language, our political institutions. They created a painting, a sculpture, a mathematics, and an astronomy worthy of comparison with the best art and literature of Europe. . . . They fought the Revolution, wrote the Constitution, developed the continent, and founded a nation. . . . This is your legacy. Will you cooperate with us to preserve and protect this inheritance?"

This ringing appeal to the Puritan "progency" issued from that quondam apex of culture, Beacon Hill. Eager to halt vicious tendencies, to view Puritan painting, sculpture, and astronomy, and to "manifest tribute generally," I lost no time in visiting the office of the N. S. P. D. I found three young ladies sending out circulars. The chiefest of the three explained how one manifests tribute to the early and colonial days. Tribute means $10 for annual, $25 for life, membership. Of course, the "historian general" would have to pass

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on my ancestry, but there would be no trouble about that. You don't have to prove your ancestor was a Puritan.

There were some swell names on the society's printed appeal: Leverett Saltonstall, Julius H. Tuttle, Richard Cabot, George R. Nutter, Calvin Coolidge, John H. Finley, Henry Parkman, and Francis Russell Hart, among them. True, the "members" with whom I managed to establish communication—many were beyond that—either declared they had never heard of the society or admitted having received a handsome diploma of complimentary honorary membership. But their names will draw just the same. Yea, even among the Puritan "progency" a sucker is born every minute.

Tuesday's invitation is more festive. It is a letter from Lowell Thomas, well-known author, lecturer, ghost writer, and radio announcer, whom I have long admired from afar but never met. On his own letter paper he wrote:

> Dear Mr. Morison: Last night, Ralph Hitz, president of the Hotel New Yorker, told me that he was anxious to have you stop at the New Yorker when you are in New York. So I volunteered to drop you a note in his behalf, because, first, Ralph Hitz is the kind of chap one likes to help; and, secondly, I'm enthusiastic about the New Yorker and the unusual attention and service they always give . . ."

And he goes on to say that this excellent chap gives "ten-dollar-a-day service and luxury" for "as little as $3.50 a day." Clipped to the corner of the letter is Lowell Thomas's own visiting card with a note scribbled on it in his own hand introducing Mr. S. E. Morison to Mr. Hitz. I am much impressed. Think of flashing that card in the face of Mr. Hitz and watching him bustle about to provide $10 worth of service and luxury for $3.50. And what a hit it would make at a Cambridge cocktail party to say: "Yes, I've just been to New York. Lowell Thomas, you know, had me put up at a nice little place he always goes to." But my dream of meeting New York's intelligentsia was spoiled when my hard-hearted secretary put Lowell Thomas's visiting card under the microscope, and reported my name to be in different ink from the rest of the penned personal message.

Wednesday brought another appeal to "Americans of Revolutionary ancestry." The Institute of American Genealogy, in that stronghold of ancestral culture, Chicago, wants me to help them print "a chronological record of all the passenger lists" of ships arriving in this country between 1607 and 1800. Some job, it seems to me, considering that there were not even ship reporters in the colonies. But the Institute of American Genealogy knows that every passenger list of every boat from the Goodspeed and the Mayflower on is tucked away "in the archives of the ports of embarkation in Europe," just waiting for the I. of A. G. to pull it out and print it. The report is signed, among others, by Bishop Burton, a pair of librarians, and a flock of presidents—the presidents of Mount Holyoke College, the Union Pacific Railroad, the D. A. R., Hampden-Sydney College, and the S. A. R. For $10 a year I can not only help to support this great work, but receive a genealogical magazine, buy "membership emblem seals," and correspond with a "trained staff." For a $100 life membership, I can write the letters F. I. A. G. after my name. And no questions asked about my pedigree; I need only be a "white citizen of sound moral character."

I give the palm to Chicago! The snob racketeers of Boston and New York are mere chiselers in comparison with the I. of A. G.

In the Driftway

EVEN an old-timer would admit that the snowstorm of February 10 and 11 was sudden and exceedingly swift. The Drifter drove that evening over roads as dry as summer; in some sections under repair they were thick with dust. The moon was shining, though mistily, when just before midnight the doors of a New England farmhouse closed upon him. At eight the next morning he awoke conscious of the stillness and isolation which only deep snow can bring. Nothing was visible beyond the white-cased windows except white flakes falling thick and endlessly. At ten when the storm abated the earth was thirteen inches down. After a ritual of preparation that began with arctics and ended with mittens, the Drifter ventured outside. The family cat, which has an unmistakable flair for backgrounds becoming to his shining black coat, came along.

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IN the gleaming morning the old white house looked more then ever a part of its ancient setting. Snow was heaped over the door sills and molded high on the steep roof. Only the freshly shoveled path leading away from the back door connected it with the world. Down the meadow, stone walls and great boulders were smooth white mounds or mountains. In the woods beyond, masses of evergreen stood out dark and sturdy in the white world; the stems of tall leafless trees looked thin and brittle against the sky. Air never seems so fresh as when it has been filtered through a heavy fall of snow, and to make the first tracks across a snow-covered field is to know why men go to the North Pole.

* * * * *

THE Drifter was absorbed in the light-tracked comings and goings of some sparrows when a bob-sled drawn by two horses went past and down the hill like something out of Currier and Ives. In the muffling snow the antiquated sled—and the steaming breath of horses and men—was visible long after all sound of it had died away, until the Drifter began to doubt its reality and his own eyes. But it was real enough, for its tracks made a narrow foot-path for him up the road. A great white birch shone out of the woods. Pine boughs sagged under their burden of snow. Strange shapes stood out where familiar rocks had been—shapes that the light wind each moment modified. Every twig, every thin edge of ice cast a luminous delicate shadow on the perfect snow. Above, the sky was a blue shell blown thin over a fragile world that undermining warmth would soon reduce.

* * * * *

THE Drifter was delighted to learn that the storm of February 10 was the heaviest in four years. And he thinks he has discovered why it is that snow storms—or anything else an old-timer can think of—are never so impressive as they were long ago. The Drifter's snow storm has already become several inches deeper than it really was, and by 1940 he will be able to say with the best of them, "Why, I remember back in 1933—"

The Drifter

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Correspondence

10,000 Miners' Wives

To the Editors of The Nation:

Ten thousand miners' wives marched to the State House in Springfield, Illinois, on January 26 and presented to Governor Horner a petition signed by the Illinois Women's Auxiliary of the Progressive Miners of America demanding the restoration of civil liberties in the coal fields of Christian and Franklin counties and immediate and adequate relief for the families of miners. The petition read, in part, as follows:

> We . . . have come to the seat of government in our State to seek redress from the oppressive and intolerable conditions in the coal fields of Illinois. Thousands of working-class housewives have marched to the State Capitol. This is an unusual event in the history of the State but these are unusual times. It is well for the State that we come while we still have faith in government, for that faith has been terrifically shaken during the past year.
>
> When it was no longer possible for our men to have a voice in determining the conditions under which they worked, because of the usurping of this right by the officials of the old union, they broke away from that organization, to which they had given long years of service and devotion, and established a new union that is responsive to the wishes of the rank and file. A reign of terror resulted . . . in which officials of the old union, the coal corporation, county and municipal authorities, and even the State joined—clubbing, tear-gassing, shooting, killing our people, bombing our homes, making it impossible for us to assemble or to enjoy any of the rights to which the Constitution of this nation entitled its citizens.
>
> Not only are thousands of our people victims of terror but they are victims of hunger. . . . In ever-increasing numbers our people are losing their homes. . . . We women who live in rented homes are in constant dread of eviction. . . . We are forced to see our sick children go unattended by doctors. Savings have disappeared. . . . Moreover, our mining communities have been discriminated against in the matter of distribution of [State] aid.
>
> Therefore, in the face of these intolerable conditions, we respectfully petition you, the Governor, and members of the Legislature of the State of Illinois: first, for the immediate and full restoration of civil liberties in the coal fields of Christian and Franklin counties; second, for increased and more equitable distribution of State aid . . .; third, that you immediately pass legislation for unemployment insurance . . .; and fourth, that you refuse to burden further the workers by the enactment of a sales tax to meet this unemployment emergency. . . .
>
> Not only is our welfare at stake, but our faith in the ability and willingness of the government to protect and serve us is menaced. Dare you fail us now?

Governor Horner received us cordially—a big delegation of fifty local presidents and fourteen State officers. The day before, a Communist delegation trying to see him had been clubbed and forced out of his office when they would not accept his offer to receive a committee of five. Damage to the Governor's quarters resulted, and the next day when I arrived with 10,000 miners' wives the city was a bunch of nerves, with two companies of soldiers in readiness.

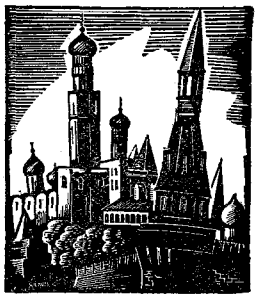
Our army was peaceful and well-disciplined, wanting mainly to demonstrate the solidarity of the new miners' union, which we certainly did. We women assembled in the armory, paraded through the streets with a motor-cycle police escort, and marched down Capitol Avenue to the State House grounds, where we massed about the statue of Lincoln and overflowed into the Capitol. We were in our uniforms—plain white smocks and head bands with our union's name. After I read the petition to the Governor, he replied point by point, with none of the politician's evasion but with statements far from satisfactory to us on unemployment insurance and increased State aid, to be financed not by a sales tax but by taxes on inheritances and high incomes.

The Governor declared he would see that the civil liberties of all citizens were maintained, by suasion if possible but if necessary by the use of any instrumentality in his power. However, he qualified his position on civil liberties by reminding us that an individual's rights do not transcend the community's rights. He did not make clear his stand in regard to the rights of minorities. He was very friendly and expressed his appreciation of our statement that we still have faith in government.

On the matter of settling the turmoil in the mine areas of Christian and Franklin counties, the Governor referred to the conferences he had been having with the two miners' organizations. He said the trouble could be settled if both sides would leave it entirely to him or to some other disinterested person, but that both sides refused to budge. We women demonstrated in the State capital that the Progressive Miners' Union is the dominant one—there are no women marching behind John Lewis to perpetuate the old union.

Since we presented our petition to the Governor, he has announced that he would select a committee of inquiry, which would not include a member of the Illinois National Guard, to investigate violations of civil liberties. I held a week of meetings in December, but when John Lewis returned from the Cincinnati convention, he ordered the sheriff to stop me, and as a result a thousand women were driven off the streets of West

1933
A Year of Endings
and New Beginnings
in Soviet Russia



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Frankfort and one woman slugged when we met to hold a public meeting. I am going back to Franklin County to see what the Governor's declaration means.

Belleville, Ill., January 28 AGNES BURNS WIECK
President, Illinois Women's Auxiliary,
Progressive Miners of America

February 16. Governor Horner's pledge that constitutional rights would be protected failed on February 5 when thugs and civil officers prevented a meeting in West Frankfort, Illinois, and clubbed women. We took the injured women to the Governor, who advised recourse to the courts, declaring that he could not intervene except at the sheriff's request.

A. B. W.

Academic Freedom

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Nineteen students of the College of the City of New York have been suspended for participating in a public trial of their president, Dr. Robinson, and the director of the evening session, Dr. Linehan. The trial was a culmination of student protest against the abrogation of academic freedom on the campus.

A student committee of the major metropolitan colleges has been formed to work for the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of the suspended students. Immediate action is imperative. Funds are necessary to carry on a successful campaign. Contributions should be sent to Sarah Sklar, 217 East Twenty-second Street, New York City.

COMMITTEE FOR REINSTATEMENT

New York, February 8

For Brooklyn Consumers

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

A "candlelight dinner," instituting a consumers' strike against the Brooklyn Edison Company, will be held at Peter's Tavern, 217 Fulton Street (at Pineapple Street) on Wednesday evening, March 1, at 6:45. The objectives of the strike are the reinstatement of 5,000 employees unjustly discharged and a reduction in electric rates. John Haynes Holmes, Heywood Broun, A. J. Muste, and others will speak.

Brooklyn, N. Y., February 17 FRANCIS HENSON

Contributors to This Issue

STEWART GRISCOM has recently completed a three-year study of the relations between the Boston press and crime for the Harvard Law School crime survey.

MALCOLM ROSS is the author of "Machine Age in the Hills."

OWEN R. LOVEJOY is the secretary of the Children's Aid Society.

JACOB ZEITLIN is the editor of a collection of Montaigne's writings, the first volume of which will appear in March.

S. E. MORISON, professor of history at Harvard University, is the author of "Builders of the Bay Colony."

LOUIS M. HACKER is coauthor with Benjamin R. Kendrick of "The United States Since 1865."

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN is the author of "Farewell to Reform."

ALTER BRODY is the author of a book of folk plays entitled "Lamentations."

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Books, Architecture, Drama

Sonnet

By MARK VAN DOREN

What golden spider warmed himself and spun
This web that is the flesh upon your bones—
Warming himself beneath a spicy sun
That caught the winds and let their little moans,
Like woven music, enter every place
To hide until love's fingers should be near?
What artisan was singing at your face?
Who wrapped the rest, that too will disappear?
For time, that made the spinner, lets him die.
He will be long in leaving, yet he must;
So every moistened thread of you will dry—
At first to lace; but then a little dust.
And I—oh, time will take my desolate hand
And sift it on you, letting it be sand.

Small Talk

Small Talk at Wreyland. By Cecil Torr. *Horace: A Return to Allegiance.* By T. R. Glover. *Anecdotes of Samuel Johnson.* By Hester Lynch Piozzi. *A Small Boy in the Sixties.* By George Sturt. The Macmillan Company. Each $1.

ENGLAND would not be what she is if it were not for two classes of idle men: the country gentleman who stays in the country and the parson who regards his "living" as precisely that. Sometimes they do no more than patronize the local flower show and write letters to the *Times* about the habits of the cuckoo. Sometimes, on the other hand, they adopt more individual pursuits. Who else would write the history of the parish church, edit the more indecent of the Restoration classics, classify the lichens, or make a complete collection of the microlepidoptera of the county? Economically they may be hard to justify, but since they add enormously to the stock of pleasantly useless knowledge, they may be easily defended by a rhetorical question similar to the one asked by the friend of an eccentric professor and reported by Cecil Torr: "Do any of you know of any other man in England who would sit for two hours up to his neck in a Syrian sewer in order to copy an inscription?"

The three sections of "Small Talk at Wreyland" were published between 1918 and 1923, but they are not known as widely as they should be, and the present pocket-sized volume of the best bits is more than welcome. Here, indeed, is the finest flower of intelligent triviality. Mr. Torr finds time to indulge a lively interest in the intimate affairs, past and present, of his forbears and his community. What is even more important, he has the skill to record memories, observations, and reflections with keen humor and exquisite grace. The conversation flows with a truly Boswellian limpidity; it seems instinctively to limit itself to whatever is interesting without being "important"; and it succeeds somehow in conveying something beyond the details with which it is concerned—namely, the flavor of an urbane mind.

Outwardly the life of the English countryside is changing. Vacationists crowd it in summer, and are willing to put up with such primitive accommodations that the author of "Small Talk" has heard of rooms with "Wash in the Blood of the Lamb" in illuminated letters where the washstand should have been. But the language and the beliefs of the farmers remain much what they were. When Mr. Torr asked one of them who had just performed a magical ceremony over a sickly baby if he thought the treatment really did any good, he got as a reply: "Well, as much good as sloppin' water over'n in church." And yet, I feel sure, the cautious skeptic who expressed himself thus had never read Chaucer's similarly ambiguous remark concerning the efficacy of a curse: "*For curs wol slee right as assoilling savith.*" In conclusion some reference may be made to a collection of opinions expressed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries concerning the baneful effects of a certain popular liquid refreshment. Cobbett spoke of its "corrosive, gnawing, and poisonous powers," and denounced as a "degrading curse" the use of this "weaker kind of laudanum, which enlivens for the moment and deadens afterwards." John Wesley referred to it as a "wasteful, unhealthy self-indulgence," and adjured his followers to "abhor it as a deadly poison, and renounce it from this very hour." Parson Davy, in his "System of Divinity," was sure that it "drains the very vitals of our national wealth." And there are others. But the point is that the liquor in question was not brandy or gin or even beer. It was tea. Nevertheless, Mr. Torr drank port from the age of two, and was surrounded by people who thought nothing more dangerous than an open bedroom window.

None of the other volumes in this series is quite so delightful as "Small Talk at Wreyland" except, perhaps, that which reprints the well-known gossip of Mrs. Piozzi. Despite the reputation of the author, T. R. Glover's Fry Memorial Lectures, published under the title "Horace: A Return to Allegiance," seem rather thinner and more trumped-up than they need have been. "A Small Boy in the Sixties," reminiscences set down by a literary wheelwright and friend of Arnold Bennett's, is full of meticulously recorded details of life in Surrey. It is interesting without having any of the sparkle of Mr. Torr's writing.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The American City

The Rise of the City: 1878-1898. By Arthur Meier Schlesinger. The Macmillan Company. $4.

HISTORICALLY-MINDED Americans will owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Schlesinger for this, the tenth volume of the series "A History of American Life": here, for the first time, is a rounded presentation of a period that has been strangely neglected by scholars. In the hands of Rhodes and Oberholtzer the history of the years 1878-98 has been largely the uninspired record of the rivalry of two groups of party hacks; in the hands of the followers of Frederick J. Turner, the only school to make a systematic study of the post-Civil War era, it has been almost entirely an examination of the settlement of the West and the influence of Western cultural and political ideas on national development. Professor Schlesinger, however, has retrieved this whole generation from obscurity; and through his patient diggings in the dust heaps of old contemporary records he has succeeded in restoring the first forms of the American metropolitan community.

The central idea of Professor Schlesinger's work is that the social history of the United States from 1878 to 1898 is a reflection in a hundred and one different glasses of the rise of the cities and the growing importance of urban living. The United States, during the years roughly included between the two world's fairs of 1876 and 1893, was perceptibly being transformed from a predominantly rural economy with a provincial outlook into a capitalistic nation whose interests were frankly world wide because our industrialists were scanning every distant horizon for sources of raw materials and markets for fin-

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ished goods. Professor Schlesinger has not told this story, leaving its recital to his colleague in the series, Miss Ida Tarbell; but he has caught every faintest nuance of the change so that what we have here, in effect, is an institutional history of the American people during its economic metamorphosis.

The thronging of immigrant hosts and of country boys and girls into the mushrooming cities; the growing complexity of the urban world and the ways in which its many problems of transportation, housing, sanitation, and education were being met; the changing roles of women in the home and in business; the great advances being made in higher education; the appearance of a large band of authentic artists, particularly in painting, sculpture, and architecture; the growing diffusion of taste; the struggle in the churches; the activities of the agents of uplift; the fight for good government: such are the larger aspects of Professor Schlesinger's narrative, and he has embellished it with a wealth of detail that cannot but stir the reader's admiration and wonder. American scholars have developed a surprisingly expert facility in the handling of social historical material; there is no question that "The Rise of the City" is the best example of that technique thus far afforded us.

If this book has a weakness it is that Professor Schlesinger has written his history not so much for the lay reader as for other historians. Everybody is here: in the field of the novel, Lew Wallace together with Henry James; in poetry, E. C. Stedman with Emily Dickinson; in painting, John W. Alexander with Thomas Eakins and A. P. Ryder—mediocrities side by side with talents of the first water, receiving careful consideration equally—and without a difference. Surely Emily Dickinson and Stephen Crane are worth more than a sentence apiece, Charles Peirce and William James more than a couple of lines, Eakins and Ryder more than a negligible footnote. The result has been, at least as far as any but the truly informed are concerned, almost a monotonous cataloguing of men and events with no effort to point up the significant and dismiss the trivial.

If John Hay's "The Bread-Winners" is to be mentioned at all, is it enough to characterize that novel by saying merely that it "dealt trenchantly with the labor problem," thus disregarding its social importance as a tract in defense of the rising capitalists of the day? If we are to have a discussion of the place of the daily press in the life of the generation, isn't it worth stopping the breathless narrative for an instant to indicate that the Chicago *Tribune's* transformation, under the same owners, from a liberal organ of the farmers into a standpatter mouthpiece of the industrial and financial overlords exactly reflected the revolution in the chief economic interest of the Middle West? Bob Ingersoll and Booker T. Washington properly belong in a record of the times; but a flood of light would have been thrown on the socially acceptable agnosticism of Ingersoll if Professor Schlesinger had also told us that Ingersoll was always ready in the law courts and on the stump to defend big business and the Republican Party; and Booker Washington's well-intrenched position in the middle-class world of the eighties and nineties would have been similarly illumined had we been told that the Negro leader preached, not the class solidarity of an oppressed race, but the harmless doctrine of self-help. The author's earlier "The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution" and his "New Viewpoints in American History" amply prove his title to be called a historian of imagination and insight; it is a pity that here he has occasionally let his zeal for presenting half-forgotten curiosities dull his critical faculties.

But to the initiated these are minor faults. It is to be hoped that Miss Tarbell's companion volume on the economic forces that made possible the rise of the cities during the period 1878-98 will have the many excellences of this one: then we shall have of this important period, actually the precursor of our own, a history that it will be difficult to supplant.

LOUIS M. HACKER

Diplomatic Peep Show

British Agent. By R. H. Bruce Lockhart. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.75.

MOST people surround governments with awe or mystery and therefore like to know what goes on behind the scenes. I think this explains the popularity of Lockhart's book. The writing is good but not distinguished, and from the historical point of view there is scarcely a shred of new information. Lockhart saw Lenin occasionally, and Trotzky and Colonel Raymond Robins frequently, during the first half of 1918 when he was England's ambassador to Soviet Moscow, but he casts no new light on their characters or policies. Yet I suppose the average citizen likes to hear how these statesmen actually talked to one another, and Lockhart makes them and himself very human. Anybody who pulls aside two inches of curtain to reveal, sometimes very inadequately, how Russian royalty or Park Avenue millionaires or the bureaucrats of the Washington merry-go-round live is assured a good sale. Lockhart's effort, too, is a peep show—a clean, diplomatic peep show.

Several years ago, when I was writing a history of Soviet foreign relations, Lockhart read to me from some of the diaries used in the preparation of "British Agent." They were interesting, but served merely to corroborate data already available. About the only unrecorded fact in Lockhart's book is the statement that he got Kerensky out of Russia. Kerensky had been overthrown by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917; he hid in the country, however, for seven whole months, until, with Lockhart's aid, he sailed for England via Murmansk, disguised as a Serbian private.

Lockhart's chief value is that he confirms, on the authority of an insider, things we already know: that the "liberal" Lord Robert Cecil was the most anti-Bolshevik member of the British war Cabinet and relentlessly fought for military intervention against Russia; that Lenin and Trotzky were prepared to help the Allies against the Germans in the spring of 1918; that the Sisson "documents" were "so palpably forged that even our Secret Service would have nothing to do with them"; that Russia was out of the war long before the Bolsheviks took her out officially, and that the Entente should have known better than to try to keep her in; that Czarist Russia was rotten to the core, morally disintegrated and riding for a fatal fall; that the Bolsheviks remained "comparatively tolerant" and even permitted bourgeois dailies to appear "until our intervention intensified the terror"—British intervention, he correctly suggests, raised "false hopes" among the whites and increased their anti-Bolshevik terror (the Cheka really started its work after the assassination of Uritzky and Volodarsky and the attempt on Lenin's life); that British consular and diplomatic agents are just plain petty bourgeois in striped trousers and cutaways; and, finally, that Lockhart intrigued against the Soviet Government while maintaining outwardly cordial relations with it, but was never quite as black as the Bolsheviks wanted to paint him. In fact, Lockhart goes down into history as the one high official who, under Raymond Robins's inspiration, realized from the very first day that Sovietism had come to stay, that it was not German-made, and that it ought to be recognized immediately. Though just thirty-one, he stuck to a most difficult and occasionally dangerous post, enjoying himself with gipsies and women all the while, and defended the only sensible policy against the united opposition of the British government and the permanent reactionaries of the Foreign Office, who ultimately achieved his fall.

Lockhart's stand for normal relations with the new regime was based on his keen understanding of the old. He had watched the last stages of its decay. He had lived with the Russian intelligentsia which could sit up long past midnight "discussing how

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to make the world safe by revolution" only to be "'fast asleep in bed on the morning of action." (Our own infant intelligentsia, by the way, is now training intensively for the same kind of performance.) Kerensky's coterie were Lockhart's friends before they took office and he penetrated to their impotence. He saw the revolution make "violent reactionaries" of men who had been liberals when liberalism was an inexpensive pose. He knew therefore that the only party with a dominant philosophy which the mass would follow was the Bolshevik Party. This is as true today as it was in 1918 when Lockhart played his little act.

In the end, of course, Lockhart proved that he was nothing more than a small-caliber official; for, when London rejected his policy and decided on anti-Bolshevik intervention, he plotted from Moscow with the whites and subordinated principle to loyalty to his employer. Despite his charm, Lockhart is only another "British agent."

LOUIS FISCHER

Cleveland, Full Length

Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage. By Allan Nevins. Dodd, Mead and Company. $5.

GROVER CLEVELAND and his age have found their biographer in Allan Nevins. The qualities of the President and the era are subtly mingled in the historian. Cleveland was thorough, industrious, gifted with enlightened common sense; Mr. Nevins has, preeminently, the same qualities. If Cleveland worked often until two or three in the morning on state papers, Mr. Nevins must have maintained a similar grueling pace in his foraging among documents and the living reminiscences of old men to complete so Boswellian a biography. In political philosophy the President and the biographer are wholly in tune; Cleveland, albeit unconsciously, had Manchester and Adam Smith written all over him; Mr. Nevins, too, is inclined to fall back upon a deep belief in the sanative properties of low tariffs, small competitive business units, the free market. In the matter of literary style, Professor Nevins harks back to the eighties, particularly in his feeling for locale (the eighties were the high noon of the "local color" school). Leisurely, compendious, this book abounds in strolls through provincial America. Everything is here, from the economics of the Gloucester fishing fleet and the history of Buffalo in the Gilded Age to a list of the fish—"tautog and squeteague"—to be caught in Buzzards Bay. Professor Nevins has written a biography that will live as long as the memory of Grover Cleveland. It becomes indispensable reading to those who would understand the relatively placid eighties and the turbulent nineties.

If there is anything wrong with the book, it would seem to rest in Mr. Nevins's acceptance of the political philosophy of Cleveland for his own—an acceptance so pervading that he ascribes "eternal" principles to his subject. Thus, Cleveland's stubborn, courageous, "you-be-damned" defense of the gold standard is the voice of heaven speaking. Personally, the reviewer cannot swallow this; events—such as the development of the cyanide process and the sudden lucky revival of gold mining in the nineties—have made Cleveland look wise and Bryan foolish; but if the gold mines of the world had continued to be niggardly (as they had been since the Civil War), what would have happened? As to the "eternal" principle of the low tariff—if all tariffs were removed, what would there be even then to prevent the recurrent glut of markets, the smashing of price levels, and the imperialist contention for the privilege of developing backward sections? Granted the relative sanity of Cleveland's actions, this question will have to be answered before the reviewer can accept the "eternal" principles of Mr. Nevins; depressions, until then, will seem to him endemic in capitalism, gold or no gold, tariff or no tariff.

But doubtless this is quibbling, and certainly the reviewer has no desire to fall in with the Blaines and the Benjamin Harrisons. If Mr. Nevins is inclined to echo E. L. Godkin in his opinion of the Populist mentality (although with modern enlightened recognition of the farmers' crying need), he is wholly fair in his treatment of the Pullman strike. In fact, the account here is the best that has ever been written of that hitherto garbled affair. Making use of new documents, Mr. Nevins puts the blame for mishandling the strikers squarely on the shoulders of Cleveland's Bostonian Attorney-General, Richard Olney, whose motto must have been, "Never give a labor sucker an even break." Olney loaded the dice against Debs in favor of the railroads, and Cleveland was misled by false information. An interesting item, contained in an appendix, argues that Justice Shiras did not change his vote in the Supreme Court income-tax decision of the nineties. Shiras has long borne the blame for invalidating the income tax; the obloquy probably belongs to Justice Brewer.

Mr. Nevins's book will, of course, replace the McElroy biography, which was incredibly reticent about the Maria Halpin interlude, and Denis Tilden Lynch's swirling paean to Cleveland, the "man four-square." Lynch, a political reporter, has more convention and campaign color in his pages, but on every other count Mr. Nevins's work is the definitive one. The Bowers life of Beveridge is superficially more brilliant, but for solid merit Mr. Nevins deserves the Pulitzer prize for biography for 1932.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

War as Collective Experience

Company K. By William March. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $2.

THE old-fashioned romanticism of war in which "gory" inevitably rhymed with "glory" and "grave" with "brave" is now to be found only in school readers, but another romantic fallacy is at the base of much contemporary war fiction, hiding itself in realistic descriptions of the horrors of war. Most novels of the war, from Latzko's "Men in War" and Dos Passos's "Three Soldiers" to Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front" and Zweig's "Sergeant Grischa," are written from the same angle—the impact of war upon the individual and his reaction to it. Whatever artistic validity these portrayals may have—and they owe not a little of their power to this effective distortion of perspective—in toto they give us an impression of war psychology which is almost as misleading as that of the glorification school. This is because they are individual representations of experiences that in their very nature could not have been individual. The data of psychoanalysis and anthropology point to the existence of a collective psyche in the herd which supersedes the individual psyche in mass experiences, as the Freudian unconscious usurps consciousness in dreams and insanity. Much has been made of the ruthless regimentation which crushes the personality of the soldier, but the spontaneous resurgence of this collective psyche, which overwhelms the ego from within, is even more destructive of individual mental processes. This regression of the ego to a collective level is its normal reflex under fire. The soldier who is unable to make this adjustment is a target for shell shock and insanity. It follows that to represent war as an individual experience is to exaggerate certain emotional responses at the expense of others to gain certain effects at the expense of others perhaps equally worth elaborating.

"Company K" is an interesting attempt to cope with this problem. Instead of looking at the war through the eyes of one man, the author has taken a whole company as his hero, and views the war through its composite eye. His book is a sort o

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"Spoon River Anthology" of the war, consisting of 131 monologues out of the mouths of the 131 members of the company. Each monologue is a dramatic sketch covering a particular incident or a particular angle of it, and by swiftly "trolleying" his focus from eye to eye as they do in the movies, Mr. March achieves a panoramic effect unattainable by straight narration. There is a suggestion in the accent of his characters that Mr. March has attended the fashionable academy conducted by Headmaster Hemingway. But whereas Hemingway's understatement is a stage whisper meant to be overheard, a subtle way of calling a spade a spade and getting you to think of it as a tractor, March's starkness is guileless and lends to his monologues the bleak honesty of drypoints.

Curiously enough, the pacifist thread running through the book does not seem part of the pattern. The author's pacifism, like that of many of his contemporaries, would appear to be retrospective. But as a diary of the daily job of war, the book has no equal. Mr. March's technical departure, however, does not completely justify itself. Fundamentally "Company K" remains an aggregation of 131 individuals reacting as individuals. Their experiences are skilfully pieced together into a mosaic portrait which gives one a very faithful likeness of the physiognomy of war, but the composite picture lacks the informing expression of a mass soul. It is of course easier to pose the problem than to suggest the solution. Perhaps such a solution demands an expansion of the forms of fiction beyond the possibilities of the medium. But the modern novel has been so resourceful in adjusting itself to the new dimensions which science has added to experience that one may confidently await further experimentation.

ALTER BRODY

Shorter Notices

Texts and Pretexts. By Aldous Huxley. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

Mr. Huxley's "Anthology with Commentaries" begins with a preface composed of more or less detached pensées and then proceeds to rather random commentary upon various not-too-familiar passages from the poets. The author believes that the great poetry of the past has been rendered superficially, but only superficially, out of date by the influence of science upon "the conceptions in terms of which men interpret their experience." He prefers "being sober to even the rosiest and most agreeable of intoxications," and he casts his vote for the kind of poetry which "doth buckle and bow the mind to the nature of things." The commentaries are occasionally interesting, but they are not Mr. Huxley at his best. Too often what should be enthusiastic and spontaneous seems rather painfully pumped up.

The Two Thieves. By T. F. Powys. The Viking Press. $2.50.

Man is nothing but mortal dust. This has been T. F. Powys's theme from the first, and if the theme itself is considerably older than Ecclesiastes it is a good theme for all that. Mr. Powys has had his own way of saying it and his own corner of the earth, which one suspects may exist only in his own mind, in which to place his hero, God, and His brother, Death. Man, in Mr. Powys's novels, is not even the quintessence of dust, but the mere dust of the plowed fields, the brown earth, strong-smelling, hard, and cruel. In this delineation Mr. Powys has always had two manners, one considerably more elevated and even intellectual than the other. In the first occurs a drawn battle between Good and Evil, in which Death often steps in and claims the spoils. The second manner at its best has been dubious allegory; at its worst it has been merely quaint. The present volume illustrates very well its author's best and his worst. The first story of the three, In Good Earth, is the tale of John Gidden, eager to sow his seed in good ground after his forbears had for so long struggled with barren earth and no harvest. That he should at last find himself the best seed and God's Acre the finest ground for it is the climax of a mood strongly held and firmly advanced to a doom that is felt to be inevitable. The other two stories, God, and The Two Thieves, in the first of which God is a high silk hat out of which riches come and in the second of which he is a thief stealing the allegorical vices which have made a man, for his little time, great, deserve small credit. Mr. Powys remains one of the unique writers of his time, and the best of his books are classics, if minor ones. But he has always written under the threat of his manner, as he has—when it was at its best—succeeded by its distinction. This time its weaknesses have on the whole betrayed him.

Sardinian Sideshow. By Amelie Posse-Brázdová. Translated from the Swedish. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

In 1915 a Swedish girl succeeded in making her way across Germany and Austria to join her fiancé, a Czech painter, in Rome. They had hardly been married when war was declared between Italy and Austria. The painter and his bride were sent to Sardinia for internment. Mme Posse-Brázdová was the bride, and she has now written a book which records her rather unusual experiences and describes the strange island where she and her husband had to live for about a year. But it is not the novelty of its subject matter that has made her book popular; it is the personality of its author. Mme Posse-Brázdová is a woman of the world, and she tells her anecdotes in a manner that the public will find Continental and diverting.

The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume IX: *The Roman Republic, 133-44 B. C.* Edited by S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, and M. P. Charlesworth. The Macmillan Company. $9.

The revolutionary tribunates of the Gracchi; the imperial wars in the East and the conquest of Gaul; the professionalization of the Roman army under Marius; the war with the allies and the enfranchisement of Italy; the civil wars that followed when the leaders of the consular and the popular parties had armies at their backs; the growing impotence of the civil institutions of the Republic and the succession of hastily legitimized dictators—Marius, Sulla, Pompey, and finally Caesar, with his presage of military autocracy; literature, art, social forms, and law during this period—these are the subjects covered thoroughly and on the whole admirably in this ninth volume of the "Cambridge Ancient History." It was a somber period during which proceeded the corruption of a people which, through heroic and successful self-defense, had entered on the destructive career of empire. The city-state did not survive its transformation into an empire, and the stern and capable Roman citizen did not survive the change from responsibility to privilege. The contributors to this volume consider chiefly the political processes of this multiform evolution. Had the economic processes been more closely studied, valuable illuminations would have been gained.

The Decade of Illusion. By Maurice Sachs. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

"The Decade of Illusion" is a book of enthusiastic gossip about the celebrities of Paris in the ten years after the war. This was a period in which one of the subjects for argument among the intelligentsia was "Is Suicide a Way Out?" So it is not clear what the author means to convey by the name of his book. He says that those were hard years, but when he looks back on them now they seem wonderful. He knew everybody, and he reminisces in order to provide uninformed America with "a sort of panoramic view . . . and Baedeker of its people."

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The view is pretty good, but the Baedeker is dull. It is made up mostly of "I met So-and-So at So-and-So's house," followed by what the author thinks of So-and-So's work; thoughts on the whole emphatic and banal, with shrill explanatory overtones, and put forth with an air of patronage toward the reader not in the best taste. Except for a few chapters Mr. Sachs either annoys or bores, but the exceptions are interesting flashes of places and people which build up the feeling of what the studio talk and behavior were like when modern art was young. His boyish Cocteau, oracle of a crowd of preoccupied youths, is vivid and sympathetic; so also are his ambitious, warm-hearted Chanel and his saintly Maritain. Mr. Sachs is proudest of Paris for her peculiar glory, a social habit which makes for intellectual traffic between the great and the brilliant of widely diverse occupations; so that the panorama includes not only the studios but the press, fashion, politics, science, business, music, the stage, the art-loving nobility, and a few American men and women about town. The value of the book is that it records the web of relations which makes Olympus in Paris so fruitful that even gossip about it is worth preserving in print.

Alexander Hamilton. By Johan J. Smertenko. Greenberg. $3.50.

Aside from its pert and misleading characterizations of Hamilton's opponents, the only contribution of this volume is a theory of the causes of Hamilton's greatness. The author holds that Hamilton was born four or five years earlier than is usually stated, that his mother, a "beautiful but beaten woman," was indiscriminate in her affections, that his father is unknown, and that the stigma of illegitimate birth induced in Hamilton an inferiority complex which his brilliant military and political career was an endeavor to erase. An examination of the facts underlying this theory certainly demonstrates the hazards of psychoanalyzing the characters of the remote past. There is not the slightest real evidence that Hamilton was ever tortured by an inferiority complex. The notion that he was sensitive about his parentage is supported only by far-fetched inferences. As for the dishonor of Hamilton's birth, the author uses some effective indirect evidence, but the absence of references to authorities and the fact that his assertions contradict Hamilton's own words weaken his case. The bibliography shows that the fifty-eight volumes of the Pickering manuscripts in the Massachusetts Historical Society have been consulted, but not the Hamilton papers in the Library of Congress.

Confessions of the Power Trust. By Carl D. Thompson. E. P. Dutton and Company. $5.

For four years—years, significantly, which marked the blowing up and bursting of the great American bubble—the Federal Trade Commission has been delving deep into the archives of our privately owned utilities and has excavated a rapidly mounting heap of rich material. Contemplating it, Carl Thompson, for many years secretary and executive head of the Public Ownership League of America, correctly concluded that there was gold in them thar' hills. Its extraction was clearly a labor of love. The result vindicates completely the cause to which he has devoted the major portion of his life, and for which he has battled courageously and effectively. With what pleasure he must have uncovered the material showing the efforts of the National Electric Light Association—successful efforts, too—to drive Carl D. Thompson off the public platform and to exclude him from the Chautauquas for the crime of contrasting electric rates in Ontario and in our municipal-ownership cities with the rates charged by the private power companies! He dug into numerous other rich veins—propagandist, political, financial. Irrefutable figures tell the story of how the American people have turned over to private interests their natural resources and for a partial use thereof are paying hundreds of millions of dollars annually in tribute. The occasional destruction of the power buccaneers amid their victims—the Foshay failure and the Insull fiasco—is carefully described. A chapter is even devoted to "power-company Socialists"—Messrs. John Spargo, Frank Bohn, and F. G. R. Gordon. Here is invaluable information for all who desire to enlist in the struggle to bring the promise of American life somewhat nearer fulfilment.

Architecture

Factory, Meet Garden City!

IT is easy to see what is in the younger architects' minds. At the New School for Social Research in New York there recently closed an exhibition that plainly portrayed it. The same idea will crop up elsewhere throughout the country and will be thrown full-scale against the sky this summer at the Chicago World's Fair. The problem with which the young architects are concerned is the house of the future, the Fordized house, the fabricated dwelling.

The shadow it has thrown has been a long one, suitable to a giant, and now the shadow shortens as the fact approaches. It has crossed Germany, where last summer there was an exhibition of the "expansible house"; and in a dozen industrial laboratories in the United States the secrets are being guarded while patents and merchandising methods are being worked out. Meanwhile, the models of free-lance designers permit us to see what is up. How soon the fabricated house may arrive in force depends on whether the real-estate business will manage soon to strangle itself, and the country with it. At the present moment every lending company, along with every building owner, is obliged to throttle anything new if it can; and should these interests manage to sell their bad debts to the government, we might expect still further delays, to put it mildly.

Yet soon or late every strong idea has its day, and so we may already pay attention to the fabricated house as a future reality. Its elements are these: swift erection (days instead of months); standard parts, light in weight and flexible in arrangement; high standards for efficiency and health; simple credit and low cost. The principle of construction for the next few years seems to be fairly crystallized. Light, wide framing—whether of metal or of wood—will be covered with large sheets or panels, three or four feet wide and as high as the room. In some of these panels the structural support will be integral. Later Buckminster Fuller's suspension principle will win through. In a farmhouse model displayed at the New School, Lawrence Kocher, who organized the exhibition, employed "skylight" framing shapes already on the market. Alfred Kastner showed drawings of most ingenious concrete houses, already published in *Opportunity,* intended for cooperative erection by Negroes for their own use. (Since Negroes are the group least inclined toward home ownership of any in America, it might have been better to set up the project on a rental basis, or for the foreign-born.) Other houses employ novel materials—for example, and not the least attractive, if proved feasible, a heavy, gaily painted cotton duck stretched over wood. Among the many exhibitors were Alfred Clauss, Norman Rice, Oscar Stonorov, and William Muschenheim, not to mention the firm of Howe and Lescaze.

All such displays in miniature project tendencies already under way in industry. At Solon, Ohio, there stands a "porcelain-enamel" house, product of the American Rolling Mills Company, which shows how badly industry needs these young architects. Not realizing that a good idea is its own best advocate, the present builders have misused their enamel product to

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Joking aside: This book contains the inside story of the ousting of William Fox from his companies, as told by William Fox to Upton Sinclair. There has been nothing like it since the days of Tom Lawson's "Frenzied Finance." The great names of present-day America are all here: Herbert Hoover, Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Charles Evans Hughes, Samuel Untermeyer, Will H. Hays, Bernard M. Baruch, Adolph Zukor, Louis B. Mayer, Clarence M. Dillon, Albert H. Wiggin, Harry L. Stuart, Harley L. Clarke.

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achieve a feeble echo of wood shingle, inferior to genuine wood in effect, while they voluntarily forgo all those qualities of metal against which the lumber men never could compete. A halfway building is going to have a half-baked look, do what you will. In Cleveland Mr. MacCornack has developed a whole housing project to be built of fabricated units; and although the set-up and plan seem to be better in another scheme, by Mr. Weinberg, using traditional construction, the hope that housing might reemploy a part of Cleveland's stagnant steel industry is significant. Rumors from Chicago are persistent, even apart from the World's Fair. Parallel with efforts at complete factory fabrication are the researches of the large contractors, such as the Starrett interests, attempting to save their own form of enterprise. Of such nature, too, is the work of the Allied Construction Industries' Small House Committee of Los Angeles.

It is the Architectural League in New York that has missed the biggest chance. So far as presentation goes, the League's confidence in Joseph Urban, the stage designer, has been more than rewarded—he has almost got them reborn. But let the league now fill in with more content. Next year let it rescue its housing show—an excellent innovation in itself—from its present step-child location in the "morgue." Then let the league borrow from Mr. Kocher some of the fabrication models of its own members. Let the "housing" and the fabrication models be juxtaposed. In this fashion the league will introduce the most fruitful development of the last decade to the essential idea of the next.

The community-planning experts of the immediate past and the industrialists are going to need each other. They should get together firmly and at once. If they don't, both will suffer. Ten years after the industrialists have intrusted their houses to the usual speculative builders, two-thirds of these houses will be blighted. That is how speculators work—witness the madhouse today. And planners will be complaining of another magnificent opportunity lost through failure to plan in advance. They will be on their knees then to the industrialists just as they are now to the dunderheaded realtors, praying and cursing for city-planning sense. They will have forgotten that they themselves scorned the fabricated house in the early days when the chance for influencing it was good.

DOUGLAS HASKELL

Films

Propaganda and Beauty

AT the Acme on Fourteenth Street, which has become this season perhaps the most enterprising of the little houses, there is to be seen in Pudovkin's "Life Is Beautiful" another memorable example of how much new and absolute beauty the camera is able to extract from "the mighty world of eye and ear." The beauty is absolute because it is an end in itself; it is new because it consists in a revelation of values of form and light and mobility which we cannot receive through any other medium.

To be specific, there is Pudovkin's exquisite treatment of water. Throughout there is a lingering on such effects as those of sunlit rain drops falling on a pool, of intermingled light and spray, of rain dropping in sharply vertical bars before some fixed object like a human face. And if such effects have never before been so potently realized on the screen, neither have the similar effects of light playing on the muscular surfaces of the human body at work. This is best illustrated in the shot of a young reaper whose uplifted scythe captures an intense beam of white light which is in turn reflected horizontally across his sweating torso. In addition to this genius for concentrating on such special effects of photography Pudovkin must be credited with a gift for organic design which places him on a level with Eisenstein and Dovshenko. His compositions may be baldly simplified, as in the Z-shaped staircase of one interior, or richly elaborated, as in the scene in which an old-fashioned droshky draws up at the rear of a dark courtyard. Certain arrangements of objects on a table suggest a Cézanne or Derain working in light and shade alone.

The special beauty of these effects, of course, cannot be described or analyzed. Pudovkin has, among other things, confirmed our faith in the cinema as an art which cannot be reduced to any terms but its own. All that we may ask is how successfully these particular elements have been identified with the theme and subject of the picture as a whole. The question is raised because it is obvious that if the version at the Acme has not been cut, Pudovkin is only vaguely motivated by the propagandist purpose behind most Soviet art. The beautiful things in "Life Is Beautiful" have always existed in life for the artist to discover and translate; the film is therefore the result of an aesthetic rather than a social or economic vision. Nothing that is valuable in it seems logically related to Lenin or to the Five-Year Plan. The story that it tells enters only as an occasional interruption—like an attack of conscience. Certainly the Soviet authorities will find it hard to condone this magnificent lapse—except in a very broad way. Some satisfaction may possibly be found in the thought that other countries which feel the need for propaganda less keenly have perhaps not yet managed to produce the conditions necessary for such absolute beauty as this to be born.

"She Done Him Wrong" at the Paramount will appeal to those who take a particular delight in resuscitations of the Bowery in the nineties, those who admire its classical embodiment in Miss Mae West, and those who are fascinated by the qualities in American life which have produced both. The picture, which owes everything to Miss West's versatile talents, is astonishing entertainment. Someone owes it to the history of our theater to write a serious and exhaustive study of Miss West's acting *style*. Here it is enough to remark that in her current picture she has united her personal endowments to a long and honorable tradition, and that the result in Lady Lou is as she herself admits, "the finest lady who ever walked the streets."

It is also pleasant to record that in "Topaze" at the Radio City Music Hall John Barrymore gives the most maturely achieved characterization that he has yet managed in the films. The brittle Parisian fable is suavely directed by D'Arrast, well cast in minor roles with Myrna Loy and Jackie Searle, and well adapted in every respect for adult enjoyment.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama

The Run of the Mill

EVERYONE knows the famous remark about poor dear Kingsley: "He said that he would rather be good than clever—and he had his wish." It contains, moreover, a hint which ought to be noted by all who undertake to write smart plays attacking the smart. Goodness and cleverness are doubtless not wholly incompatible; but unless one is perfectly sure one is both, one had better keep the emphasis on the first quality when setting out to depreciate the second. Virtue, plain and unadorned, has her charm; but Virtue tricked out in second-rate wit does not show to her best advantage. Sound sentiments remain sound even if they seem a little bit inarticulate, but it is

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March 1st, 1933—6:45 P.M. Subscription 75c

hard to admire a clumsy epigram just because its moral points the right way. Milton, for example, said some very impressive things about female virtue, but he did not make the mistake of allowing the devil to choose the weapons.

These reflections are suggested by a play called "The Sophisticrats" presented at the Bijou Theater. In a general way it sets out to expose the shallowness of the wisecracking fraternity, and to exhibit the ultimate triumph of decency and good sense over smart impropriety. The heroine is a small-town girl who has made something of a reputation in the city with two books of verse entitled "Bedroom Ballads" and "Songs to Many Lovers." The hero is a young man who would rather be good than clever, and who gets the girl as well as his wish. But the trouble is that the bright lines are not bright enough. Better things have been said in favor of promiscuity, and even purity has been made, on other occasions, to seem more attractive.

It is true, to be sure, that the characters are supposed to be only small-town wits rather than the real, big-city things. Whenever an epigram seems a little flat, one is at perfect liberty to assume that it is just so much the more in character. But that, unfortunately, does not make it any more entertaining, and if the thesis is only that it is better to be good than almost clever, then the thesis is hardly important enough to justify the elaborateness of the proof. For the sake of the record the following facts may be added: (a) There are three really good lines—one in each act; (b) the heroine turns out to be only a virgin with a lurid imagination; (c) Helen Brooks, as the good-bad girl, and Lewis Martin, as a swindler who poses as America's greatest novelist, give good accounts of themselves.

"Before Morning" (Ritz Theater) is one act of acceptable drama followed by two acts of a reasonably exciting murder mystery. Here again the heroine is a lady with good intentions but too many fast friends, and here again the hero is a solid young man eager to take her out of it all. He is willing to overlook the past as long as it is vague enough, but when a former lover is found dead in her apartment on the very night of his honorable proposal, even his generous heart—educated in the great open spaces of Detroit and accustomed to dealing only with clean honest automobile manufacturers like himself—is momentarily stumped. Things look even darker when it is discovered that the lover was poisoned with nicotine, and when it is noted that the heroine had a very good reason for wanting to get rid of him. McKay Morris gives a superb performance as a really villainous villain, but since, in these difficult times, even a moderately entertaining play like "Before Morning" is not likely to last long, there is no reason why one should be left in ignorance concerning how it all came out. The lover's wife really did it because she wanted to marry a prominent Italian whose ecclesiastical connections made it impossible for him to unite himself with a divorced woman. Probably this proves something about either the dangers of loose friends or the evils which follow too intolerant an attitude toward divorce. You may take your choice.

"Melody" (Casino Theater) represents George White's determination to become a producer of operetta. After all these years Mr. White has found a plot, and the famous "Scandals" have been replaced by a romantic opus dealing melodiously with the fate of three generations in making their way from the Latin Quarter to a Radio City. The work is elaborately staged, melodiously set, and well sung. Evelyn Herbert has, as a matter of fact, an unusually good voice, and there is also Jeanne Aubert. Yet I must confess that I was never moved to any great enthusiasm. Now that there is a plot, there is perhaps rather too much of it. Perhaps also the *longueurs* of a musical entertainment are more noticeable when the ladies of the ensemble are so elaborately and completely costumed. Mr. White did not use to go in for so many draperies. As Shakespeare asks, "Why are these things hid?"

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